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The Shape of Things

IN WITHDRAWING TO SINGAPORE ISLAND from the mainland of the Malay Peninsula, the British successfully performed a maneuver comparable to the withdrawal of MacArthur's forces from Manila to Corregidor and the Bataan Peninsula. Without doubt the British are now in very strong positions, from which it will be difficult to dislodge them. But it would be folly to conceal the fact that anti-Axis nations have suffered a defeat of the first magnitude. Whether or not the British will ultimately save Singapore from falling into Japanese hands, the withdrawal has largely nullified its value. It would be impossible under present conditions, for example, to use the base for offensive operations; and it is doubtful that the island can be adequately reinforced. There is some question, however, whether the Japanese will risk the losses of an all-out attack on the fortress or transfer part of their forces on the Malay Peninsula to the Burma front in an effort to take Rangoon before British reinforcements reach that city. The situation on the Burma front is almost as critical as that at Singapore. Having taken the strategic port of Moulmein, the Japanese are a comparatively short distance from Rangoon. The defenders are few and inadequately armed, but their positions are fairly strong. And the American airmen who have been sent to guard the Burma road have shown themselves qualitatively if not quantitatively superior to the invaders. Given adequate and timely reinforcements, particularly in the air, Singapore and Burma should both be able to hold out.

*

ELSEWHERE IN THE VAST FAR EASTERN WAR the United Nations are just about holding their own. The Japanese have made further progress in the Dutch East Indies, capturing Pontianak and threatening the Amboina naval base. Although Dutch resistance continues, the oil-rich island of Borneo appears lost to the invaders. On the other hand, the American Pacific Fleet seems to have wrought major damage to Japanese bases in the Marshall and Gilbert Islands and thus cleared the route for American reinforcements for the southern

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Pacific front. In the Philippines, American and Filipino forces under General MacArthur continue to hold their positions in face of violent Japanese attacks. Although the Japanese have made air attacks on towns in northeastern New Guinea, they have made no further landings in this area. Australian resistance continues near Rabaul and the other points occupied by the Japanese last week. The best news of all comes from China, where the troops of Chiang Kai-shek won a decisive victory at Waichow, north of Hongkong, and are reported to be advancing eastward toward Canton. In North China the Fifteenth Division of Wang Ching-wei's puppet regime has gone over to the Chinese with its Japanese arms. Further desertions are not unlikely and would seriously endanger the Japanese position in China.

✶

HEAVILY GUARDED BY GESTAPO AGENTS and his own thugs, Vidkun Quisling has been installed as Norwegian Premier by the grace of Hitler. The exact significance of this move is not yet certain, as the German army of occupation will, of course, remain and Herr Terboven, the German Commissioner, is to continue as head of the German civil administration and Quisling's chief adviser.The appointment can only further embitter the 99 per cent of the people who look to the day "when the King comes home." Perhaps the Germans, convinced that the Norwegians can be neither bludgeoned nor cajoled into accepting the "new order," have decided to see if painting the Quisling lath to look like iron will lend it a trifle more authority and so stiffen the oozing courage of the *Hirdmen*. Again the Nazis may have in mind the placing of direct responsibility for their terror on the shoulders of these traitors so as to provide a supply of scapegoats against the wrath to come. According to some reports, the appointment of Quisling may lead to a treaty of peace between his government and Germany, which is still formally at war with Norway. This would enable Quisling to set up his own diplomatic corps and demand recognition from neutrals, such as Sweden, which continue to maintain relations with the Norwegian government in exile. That would provide a difficult problem for Sweden, but the Swedish press indicates plainly that any attempt at intimidation either by Quisling or his Nazi instigators will be firmly resisted.

✶

THE SUCCESS OF JUAN ANTONIO RIOS IN THE presidential elections in Chile is a much clearer victory for the United States than the resounding resolutions adopted at Rio. It puts in office a man and a group of parties solidly committed to the democratic cause. It insures Chile's whole-hearted cooperation in the hemisphere's anti-Axis front. And it will fortify the democratic elements in many other South American countries. The election of Rios was in doubt up to the last moment. The rightist candidate, General Carlos Ibañez, had seemed to be gaining ground as the result of heavy financial reinforcements allegedly from Axis sources. Although the Popular Front parties supporting Rios were stronger numerically than the rightists, they were severely handicapped by lack of funds. That Rios won, in spite of this, by a majority of more than 50,000 votes is an impressive tribute to the democratic feeling of the Chilean people. Some observers fear that Ibañez, defeated, will try to overthrow the government by force. This danger must not be ignored; but if the United States carries through with energy its policy of economic support, Ibañez may think twice before attempting a coup. The overwhelming success of the Popular Front at the polls, coupled with the promise of greater economic stability, presents formidable obstacles to a would-be dictator.

✶

PRIME MINISTER KING'S DECISION TO ASK for a plebiscite to release him from his anti-conscription pledge of 1940 has provoked an unexpected amount of controversy within Canada. Opposition to the plebiscite has been voiced by those favoring as well as by those opposing the extension of the draft to cover overseas service. One Liberal member of Parliament from Quebec, Liguori Lacombe, has crossed the floor of the House and formed an anti-conscription "Canada Party," of which he is the sole member. It is probable that Mr. Lacombe's position will find a good deal of support in Quebec, where a considerable body of French nationalists are firmly against conscription. On the other hand, Ross Gray, a former Liberal whip, has strongly opposed the plebiscite on the ground that it means unnecessary delay and will only accentuate internal conflict over the issue. This view is shared by a section of the opposition Conservative Party, which has in general favored the extension of conscription. So far Mr. King has carefully avoided making any commitment as to what he will do if the plebiscite, as seems probable, gives him a free hand. It is expected, however, that he will immediately ask Parliament to remove the present bars against sending drafted men overseas.

✶

ADMIRAL MUSELIER HAS WON THE LATEST round in his skirmish with the careful men in the State Department who would like to get the Free French forces out of St. Pierre-Miquelon, thereby keeping the favor of Vichy and saving their own rather shop-worn faces. On January 27 a dispatch from Ottawa spoke of reports of a solution reached in London. According to the plan, the islands would be neutralized, Canada would be asked to assume responsibility for the protection of their neutrality, and Admiral Muselier would withdraw his small force. A few days later the gay Admiral issued a statement from his strategic island post both exposing

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and repudiating the plan. He wanted to believe, he said, that it was nothing more than another of those false rumors put out by the Nazi propagandists. He pointed out that the people of St. Pierre-Miquelon were not neutral, that neutrality was in fact abhorrent to them; he said, moreover, that the four ships he had brought to the islands had already resumed "the combat at the side of American forces" in the Atlantic and had sunk one enemy submarine. He spoke throughout on the assumption that the Atlantic Charter meant what it said. We await the next round; and we are betting on the Admiral.

*

MARTIN DIES, WHO WANTS CONGRESS TO give him enough money to start another great witch-hunt, has done nothing in recent months to deserve one cent of public funds. During the past two weeks his committee has heard testimony from James Arnold Colescott of the Ku Klux Klan and other assorted fascists, but in general the old pattern of harassing ten liberals for every pro-Nazi he timidly investigates has been faithfully followed. His most ambitious project has been to keep Joseph P. Lash, Malcolm Cowley, and Goodwin Watson out of government jobs on the grounds that each was at one time or another associated with organizations that were part of the Communist transmission belt. In the case of Messrs. Cowley and Lash, Dies seems to have failed, but his attack on Goodwin Watson has resulted in a dangerous Congressional precedent. The bill which grants a new appropriation for the Federal Communications Commission carries a rider, written in by Joe Starnes of the Dies committee, forbidding any part of the money to be spent on a salary for Goodwin Watson. This may well be a usurpation of administrative function by Congress and as such unconstitutional. We hope that it is immediately tested in the courts. If it should go unchallenged, however, we hope that a rider will be attached to the Dies committee appropriations forbidding any part of the money to be spent on or by Martin Dies—or Joe Starnes.

*

IT IS INTERESTING IF NOT SURPRISING TO find Lindbergh's views about the "yellow peril" popping up in a pro-German newspaper in Stockholm. Two recent editorials in *Aftonbladet,* notorious as a pipe line for Goebbels, have stressed the theme that it is tragic for "white peoples to fight among themselves while the Japanese are taking away their possessions in the East." This was the thesis of the famous article which Lindbergh contributed to the *Reader's Digest* in March, 1940. Advocating the cooperation of Western nations strong enough to police the world, he wrote: "Germany is as essential to this group as England or France, for she alone can either dam the Asiatic horde or form the spearhead of their penetration into Europe." At a private gathering of leading America Firsters in New York on December 17, 1941, Lindbergh is reported to have stressed again the idea that the yellow races were the only real danger to the West, and his remarks seem to have inspired an undercover campaign by the isolationists to spread the notion that the one important enemy is Japan and to soft-peddle the fight against Hitler. An article in the January 24 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* may well serve to promote this campaign. According to its author, Demaree Bess, "the Axis is a myth" so far as Germany and Japan are concerned. We are confronted, he says, not by "a powerful organic union but [by] two separate nations whose ideologies and ambitions and military strategy are more often competitive than cooperative." It is, of course, almost certain that if the Axis won the war, its components would split and fight each other. But it seems to us highly dangerous, as well as incorrect, to minimize the closeness of present working arrangements between the two partners. To do so is to open the door to Nazi propaganda of the kind oozing out through Sweden, propaganda skilfully designed to divide and confuse our counsels.

*

EXCELLENT MATERIAL FOR A HITCHCOCK thriller is to be found in the case of Werner von Clemm, American agent of the German High Command, cousin of Joachim von Ribbentrop, and, according to the indictment against him, fence extraordinary. Mr. von Clemm, a naturalized citizen for the past ten years and reported by the press to have sported an America First button during the heyday of that society, is president of the Pioneer Import Corporation, which, the indictment runs, has been engaged in importing the perfect blue-white diamonds picked up by the German looters of the Low Countries and selling them illicitly to raise funds for financing Nazi propaganda in this country. Involved in the tale is the Nazi High Command, which federal attorneys assert warned the Pioneer Import Corporation last spring that shipments via the Soviet Union would soon stop. "Aunt Kate dying fast" was the cryptic message that heralded the death of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Thus did America Firster von Clemm learn of Aunt Kate's grave condition before Uncle Joe even knew she was sick. The same week that brought trouble to Ribbentrop's kinsman saw the arrest of another star of the isolationist galaxy. Ralph Townsend, a member of the staff of *Scribner's Commentator,* was picked up by detectives on a charge of having distributed Japanese propaganda, for so many yen a month, without bothering to register as a foreign agent. *Scribner's Commentator,* which served as the intellectual organ of the more wild-eyed isolationists but is now bulging with martial spirit, was so feverishly American, it will be recalled, that it fled to Wisconsin to be rid of the subversive foreign influences of the East.

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Irresponsible Neutrality

PRIME MINISTER DE VALERA has given a churlish welcome to the American troops who landed in Northern Ireland last week. Although their presence to some extent lessens the chances of a German attempt against Eire, he complains that the American action means recognition of a "Quisling government" in Belfast and support for a partition which to him is as indefensible an aggression as the partition of Poland. Ireland, he says, has no desire to be brought into conflict with the United States, but it is "our duty to make it clearly understood that no matter what troops occupy the Six Counties, the Irish people's claim to union of the national territory and supreme jurisdiction will remain unabated."

Eire's government, it would seem, recognizes no other duty to Ireland or the world than the reiteration of that claim and the maintenance of strict neutrality. Old grievances blind it to present dangers which geography forces it to share with the United States and Britain. Foremost among such dangers is that of a German invasion of Eire which, if successful, would interpose a fatal barrier between England and America and would probably lead to the reduction of the British fortress. It is hardly necessary to argue, at this date, that the defeat of Britain would be a devastating blow at the United States.

De Valera declares that, given arms, Eire can equip a force strong enough to repel or at least delay an invasion. He expects to get such arms from Britain and America, and, in fact, Britain has recently started to ship weapons to southern Ireland. But obviously the provision of such supplies, as well as the import into Eire of much-needed wheat and raw materials, depends on the success of the Anglo-American effort to keep open the North Atlantic sea lanes. That problem would be enormously simplified if air and sea bases in southern Ireland were made available, would even be assisted to some extent if Eire gave the United States non-belligerent rights in its ports. But Mr. de Valera, while expecting to receive benefits from Anglo-American convoys, is not prepared to share the responsibility for their success.

The Irish people and their leaders are aiming, legitimately, at independence for the whole of Ireland, but their aloofness from the cause of the United Nations will only hinder the realization of that aim. Their neutrality impedes Anglo-American cooperation, which is dependent on the maintenance of the Atlantic life line, but in no way bothers Hitler. On the contrary, it allows him to maintain an observation post at Dublin and to organize a fifth column in Eire with branches in Northern Ireland. If and when invasion becomes a desirable move for him, Eire's neutrality will be no more of an obstacle than was that of Norway, Denmark, or Holland. The fact that Britain and now the United States have strong forces in Ulster which could rapidly be moved south is a much stronger deterrent. Should Hitler succeed in defeating Britain, Eire's fate is certain. It could choose either to be a Norway and go down fighting or a Bulgaria accepting without resistance the benefits of Nazi "protection." In either case it would become a German base for the final battle against America.

Eire will never be able to take over the Six Counties except by agreement with the Protestant majority there unless it is prepared to wage civil war and kill, imprison, or deport 600,000 recalcitrants. It demands that Britain shall abandon support for the government of Northern Ireland and force it to accept the rule of Dublin. But how can Britain be expected to repudiate, in the midst of its perils, a government which is giving it support in favor of one that practices a cold neutrality? The fact that Northern Ireland remains part of the United Kingdom is very probably responsible for Britain's continued existence, for had all Ireland remained neutral the German blockade might well have succeeded.

The policy of De Valera's government is, in short, giving the supporters of partition practical arguments difficult to answer, since it seems to prove that Britain can forego its toehold in Ireland only at the expense of its own security. If a few million Irish are indifferent to the continued freedom of 46,000,000 English, Welsh, and Scots, they can hardly expect that their own claims to independence will receive a sympathetic hearing either in Britain or in America, which knows that its own fate is intimately linked to that of Britain.

The Price-Bill Fiasco

THE President must have had many misgivings in reaching his decision to sign the outrageous price-control bill which was dumped on his desk by a recalcitrant Congress. It is possible that he would have decided to veto it if he had not been able to obtain the cooperation of Secretary Wickard in checking the rise in farm prices. The Secretary's action in announcing that government-controlled stocks of wheat and corn will be placed on the market at 85 per cent of parity and his warning against price rises above the parity level indicated that the Cabinet was at last standing together in the effort to prevent inflation. This was confirmed when Mr. Wickard maintained his position in the face of an all-day grilling by the Senate Agriculture Committee. His stand is highly important in view of the powers given him by the price bill.

But even with an assurance that Mr. Wickard will not use his power to block the Administrator's efforts, the price-control bill is still an open invitation to inflation. The fact that it sets forth 110 per cent of parity as a legitimate goal for farm prices probably means that the

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farm bloc will not rest until it has succeeded in pushing prices to this point. The Administration has power to resist this effort through its control over the stores of surplus commodities, but if it exercises its powers too drastically it may find them curbed by a hostile Congress.

The seriousness of the situation which would arise if farm prices were allowed to rise to 110 per cent of parity does not seem to be generally understood either by Congress or by the public. From the consumers' point of view agricultural prices are by and large food prices. Food costs make up nearly half of the budget of the low-income groups. And food prices have already risen more than 20 per cent, as compared with a rise of less than 10 per cent in the other items in the family budget. Before reaching the ceiling provided in the price bill, wheat prices could rise another 40 cents a bushel, cotton could increase from 16 to 21½ cents a pound, corn could advance from 67 cents to $1.02 a bushel, potatoes could rise from 83 cents to $1.25, sheep from $5.15 to $7.17 a hundredweight, and butter might jump from 34 to 43 cents a pound. Four major farm products—beef cattle, veal calves, wool, and rice—have already reached the point where a ceiling could be imposed under the bill, but it is not expected that action will be taken at this time because of the Administration's desire to increase production of these products. Thus it is apparent that a very considerable increase in the cost of living of working-class families may take place without the Price Administrator being able to do anything to stop it. Such a rise in living costs is almost certain to be accompanied by demands for wage and salary increases which, if granted, will force up the prices of industrial products.

The most that can be hoped from the price bill is that the Price Administrator may be enabled to put the brakes on the inflationary process. He will constantly have to make adjustments upward, for he cannot maintain a ceiling if advancing raw-material and labor costs make it impossible for producers and distributors to break even. Leon Henderson, we may assume, will do everything in his power to check the inflationary process. The success of his efforts will depend not only on the support he receives from other government departments but on the policies which are adopted to finance the war. If the costs of the war are to be met primarily by an expansion of credit, it makes relatively little difference what powers are given the Price Administrator. Under such conditions there is no way in which the inflationary process can long be held under control. But if a determined effort to pay for the war by taxation is made and excess funds are drained off, either by voluntary or compulsory savings, there is hope that even at this late date the spiral of rising prices can be checked. The battle for an effective price-control measure has been lost. But the 1942 tax bill will open a new and more decisive phase of the same struggle.

Churchill's Vote

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

A VOTE of confidence in an hour of national danger means something quite different from what it would in ordinary times. No one knows that better than the British Prime Minister; so it is not likely that he will misinterpret his 464 to 1 victory last week in the House of Commons. That vote was not a measure of the confidence of the people's representatives in Mr. Churchill's government. It was a measure of Britain's determination to win the war.

Mr. Churchill, with his customary admirable frankness, had laid before the Commons the recent record of the government in conducting the war. He had again exposed without camouflage the disastrous lack of preparation which, from the start, has prevented the British, along with Hitler's other opponents, from meeting German aggression in sufficient force with adequate equipment at enough strategic points. This weakness is one for which the present government can be blamed in only a limited degree. Mr. Churchill took over liabilities accumulated through years of slackness and appeasement. His administration may not have reached Nazi standards of single-minded effort, but it has revolutionized British industrial methods and multiplied output.

Nor did Mr. Churchill's opponents convict him of major errors in strategy. Granted inadequate supplies of weapons and men, the choices before the British Defense Minister—who is also the Prime Minister—were desperate; and whatever choice was made was likely to seem unfortunate in retrospect. Since both courses were not possible, was it better to send supplies to Russia and reestablish an active front in the Middle East rather than put the major effort into the defense of Singapore? Mr. Churchill and his advisers decided that it was. They decided that it was more important to help Russia check Hitler's drive through the Caucasus and try to head off a thrust through the back door to Russia, India, and the Indian Ocean. Today, with Singapore under siege, the Dutch Indies invaded at half a dozen points, and India threatened from the East, it is easy to argue that the choice was a mistaken one. But when it was made the American fleet was intact in the Pacific and Japan was still pretending that it did not want war.

Whether or not Mr. Churchill's opponents were convinced by his defense is more or less beside the point; they never had any intention of turning out the government. It was the Prime Minister who insisted on a vote of confidence. Responsible democratic parliaments do not vote against a war government unless catastrophe persuades them of its bad management or its bad faith. That situation has not arisen in England. On the contrary, Mr. Churchill's leadership has become so profoundly iden-

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tified with the will of the British people to fight and to win that the vote of confidence was really a declaration of faith in the nation itself; and, in spite of his sneers, Hitler must have well understood its significance.

But the vote which officially closed the debate did not end it in fact. Even though no final case was made against the government's conduct of the war, many telling points were raised, and they will keep coming up until the people are satisfied. Already one important change has been promised. In his second speech Churchill announced that he would appoint a single minister of production to take over functions now divided among three agencies. And it is more than likely that other changes—including some in the government itself—will follow. For the illogic of politics makes it easier for the head of a government to do what his opponents want if they vote for him than if they vote against him, and a closer division might well have inclined the Prime Minister to stand by his subordinates just because they and he faced greater odds. It will be no surprise if a few of the most egregious appeasers are eliminated within the next few months.

If they are not, the issue will be joined again. The people, the press, and the Commons are united in outspoken distrust of the Chamberlain hold-overs in the government. They distrust them no matter what happens at Singapore or in Libya. They distrust them for what they are—reactionaries, men who bear direct responsibility for Britain's present precarious position, men who sacrificed all but the very sticks and stones of England itself in their miserable attempts to buy off the aggressors.

As long as these men hold important posts, Churchill's government will labor under a cloud of suspicion that cannot be exorcised by talk. This fact is made amply clear in an article by J. Alvarez del Vayo on another page of this issue. Men will gladly fight and die, and will even march bravely to defeat if necessary, but only when they are led by men whom they honor and trust. The British people neither honor nor trust Sir John Simon, Sir Samuel Hoare, David Margesson, Sir Kingsley Wood, Lord Croft, Colonel Moore-Brabazon, and others of their breed. To most Englishmen these officials are vestigial relics of a regime that brought Britain to the edge of defeat. They are symbols of shame as well as of incompetence. Mr. Churchill has a terrible war to fight. In the months ahead he will need the confidence of the people far more than the support of party hacks. He cannot afford to drag along with him the burdensome load of political deadweights that are still attached to his ministry. In the sharp words spoken by the Labor member, Emanuel Shinwell, during the debate last week there was a solid basis of truth which the final vote could not obliterate. Said Mr. Shinwell: "I suggest there might be two votes of confidence—one for the Prime Minister and the other for the remaining members of the government. In the first case probably 90 per cent would vote for the Prime Minister. In the second instance 90 per cent of the House—and possibly the Prime Minister—would vote against the government."

Admonition from a Friend

Dear Freda: Please hush yo' mouf. Don't you know that all this yapping by liberals about the "free" European groups is upsetting to the Berles *et al.?* Don't you know that these architects of the future at work in their little vacuum down in Washington need the most complete quiet? You mention the "free" Spaniards as being among those who are getting the brush-off, and I am sure that you have in mind men like the Negrín and the Vayos who fought that protracted holding action back years ago when the issues were so clear, so indecently clear. But why bring all this up again when by so doing you risk upsetting delicately contrived plans for a real Free Spanish movement that can go places and, what's more, insure continuity in the department's Spanish policy?

The plan is roughly this: When Hitler moves down into Spain on his way to Gibraltar, Tangier, Casablanca, and way points, General Franco, behind the back of his little hand, will whisper a faint protest. And in London this protest will be carried to the Foreign Office by His Grace the Duke of Alba, who will say, "The Caudillo is having to submit to a fate worse than death, but through me and other friends abroad he is, vicariously, escaping it." Juan Francisco de Cárdenas will carry the same intelligence to our State Department. Then these two gentlemen will be charged with setting up a Free Spanish government around H. R. H. Don Juan de Bourbon y Battenberg, Alfonso's heir, and around Don Juan March, the "last pirate of the Mediterranean," and around the Bishop of Madrid-Alcala, who will either have to be smuggled out of Spain or, remaining there, go underground while his colleagues of the Spanish hierarchy continue to bless the Phalanx and the New Order. In this way the Old Spain of the grandees, the bishops, and the generals can't lose no matter who wins the war, and, assuming that we can win the war by such tricks as these, we will have insured, as I said above, continuity in British and American policy in Spain and the survival of the cherished values of the past to which we have sacrificed so much all these years.

Please, then, don't talk as you have been doing in every issue of late or you will spoil it all, simply wreck a program that goes far, far beyond old stuff like the Fourteen Points, the Pittsburgh agreement, and Peace without Victory. This time it is to be Victory without Peace—if you will only hush yo' mouf and give no hint to the peoples of Europe that there are in America men and women, millions of them, who also want to see the President's Four Freedoms made to mean something.

JAY ALLEN

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Scapegoats and Facts

BY DONALD W. MITCHELL

THE report of the Roberts board can be final only to those persons who are satisfied with merely finding scapegoats on whom to pin the blame for blunders. Virtually no military expert foresaw the attack on Pearl Harbor, and few would have prophesied its success if they had thought it possible. It is abundantly clear now as from the beginning that the attack succeeded not because Hawaii lacked ample defenses but only because of the worst failure in leadership known to American history.

The report should be followed up not merely with disciplinary action against the two luckless commanders but with thorough renovation of a military system that in time of test proved utterly defective. For the responsibility for Pearl Harbor goes farther back than General Short and Admiral Kimmel. The disaster was the outcome of faults—and a clinching proof of their existence—which experts have long observed in our army and navy: stupidity and lack of vision in the higher ranks and stubborn non-cooperation between the services. General Short and Admiral Kimmel were products of a system whose faults are now being mercilessly exposed by war.

Far too much of the responsibility lies with the American people themselves. As a nation we have normally pursued a course of disinterest in the armed services. Very few American newspapers and fewer magazines have given space to military affairs or employed persons competent to interpret them to the general public. Since no army or navy can become large and efficient overnight, the public attitude should at least be one of critical support, of sympathetic interest tempered with a readiness to attack blunders and shortcomings.

Intelligent criticism of the services has seldom been forthcoming. In the past civilians have rarely had sufficient knowledge to provide it—a condition which the services, with their tight censoring of news and ostrich-like attitude toward their own defects, have done little to remedy. Criticism from within, if aimed at anything really fundamental, has usually been promptly squelched. Only at rare intervals has an officer, especially one of junior grade, been fortunate enough to succeed in promoting changes without incurring official displeasure.

Every newspaper reader has heard of the case of "Billy" Mitchell in the 1920's. About the same time Admiral Magruder was demoted for revealing bad conditions in American naval yards. An even better illustration of the difficulty of effecting improvements against the opposition of the closed minds in the higher ranks is afforded by the case of Admiral William S. Sims, one of the ablest naval officers the United States ever produced. Early in his career Sims discovered that the gunnery of the American navy was less than a third as accurate as that of the other principal naval powers. Alarmed by his findings, he started a voluminous but entirely one-sided correspondence with the Navy Department, urging the necessity of reforms. When all attempts to bring about a change through the regular channels proved vain, Sims appealed directly to President Theodore Roosevelt, from whom he received authority to put his ideas into effect. They were revolutionary and quickly made American gunnery the best in the world. Had it not been for Roosevelt, the reformer would certainly have been court-martialed by incompetent superiors.

High-grade leadership in any activity depends on the education and selection of the abler personnel for positions of responsibility. Weakness in education may be overcome by intelligent choice of the best person for the job, but if the method of selection employed does not push up the best, the whole service is permanently weakened. In our navy and army rapid advancement of the best personnel is not the rule.

The system of naval promotion, though somewhat the better of the two, has long been a sore spot. Formerly the navy tried promotion by seniority, a method which offered no reward for superior ability and imposed no penalty for dulness or sloth. Men reached high position only when they were about ready to retire. So obvious were the shortcomings of this system that the method was changed to one by which officers were selected for retirement. When the "plucking board" began to cut into good material, further difficulties arose. Today the navy is still using retirement, but has added promotion through selection by boards of naval officers. Each candidate is required to serve a certain length of time in a given grade, and final retirement occurs at sixty-four.

This system has definite defects. The boards that do the selecting are faced with many candidates having similar records. Being human, the board members vote for those they know and like and against those who may in any way have aroused their antagonism. It is significant, for example, that officers not graduated from Annapolis but taken in during World War I have been retired far more rapidly than any other group. Similar considerations further the promotion of men of wealth and social position or with prominent relatives higher up in the navy. From time to time one hears rumors of "rings"

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and "cliques" within the service devoted to the advancement of their own members. Such reports are hard to check, but they have an ominous sound. William O. Stevens, writing in *Forum* less than three years ago, cited example after example of gross favoritism and the overlooking of major faults by selection boards. Further, candidates are graded as "most fitted," "fitted," and "not fitted" for promotion. Those in the second group, often excellent men, serve for a few years and are then, in normal times, retired. Only widespread publicity and the personal intervention of President Roosevelt in the spring of 1940 prevented the shelving of eight of the ablest aviation officers in the United States at a time when the navy was in desperate need of flying personnel.

On the whole, the abler men tend to rise, but they do not rise fast enough. Men attain the higher ranks in the United States navy at a more advanced age than in any other. Because they can reach flag rank only late in life and then enjoy it but a short time, most of their careers must be devoted to excellent performance of routine duties rather than to preparation for high command. Older men are also physically and mentally less rugged and are likely to have a rigidly conservative outlook and, as Pearl Harbor indicates, little imagination.

Unfortunately, along with abler persons, incompetents also rise to high rank. When a submarine disaster occurred along the Atlantic coast some years ago, the admiral in charge was cross-examined by a Congressional investigating committee as follows:

Q. Why did it take so long for air to be started into the compartment?

A. I just can't be positive about such things. I just can't remember. Ask the technical people.

Q. Why was not the salvage line constructed to send breathing air into the torpedo chamber connected?

A. Well, I don't really know. I can't answer that question. My impression is the divers did all they could do. As to details, I can't tell you. You'll have to ask the technical men.

Q. When was the compartment air line connected?

A. I don't know that it was connected. I'm not sure.

Q. Is the Falcon well equipped for rescue work?

A. There is none better anywhere, but I don't know. I can't be positive about such things.

This paragon of naval knowledge was severely censured by the committee for ignorance and incompetence —a fact which apparently did not weigh too heavily on the minds in the Navy Department, for early in the Roosevelt Administration he was promoted to the command of the battle fleet. The reverse side of the medal was the case of Admiral J. K. Taussig, World War hero, brilliant naval scholar, and one of the ablest officers in recent naval history. Whether his involvement in a naval feud on the wrong side back in the Wilson Administration affected his chances of reaching high command is impossible to prove, but though he was high on the list of admirals he [illegible] no position more responsible than the command of a [illegible]al district and was retired for age within the past year.

The army has the advantage over the navy of knowing that its promotion system is in need of change. Experience of selective service has had a sobering effect on all but a handful of super-patriots who are convinced that army leadership, like everything American, is the best of its kind. In general outlines the system is not dissimilar to that of the navy except that a West Point background is of much less importance than the corresponding course at Annapolis. A minimum time must be served in each grade, and promotion through the ranks is slow but fairly sure. Efficiency reports, which are a factor in army as in navy promotion, are principally concerned with routine. But while the navy at least pays lip-service to selection by merit, the army promotes through the rank of colonel solely on the basis of seniority. Only when an officer approaches field rank does selection by merit partly replace seniority. The system is further complicated by the large number of reserve officers and national guardsmen, some holding commissions for no very good reason. The most hopeful present development is the granting of commissions to some of the fine selectees who have been called into service.

The results of the army promotion system are unfortunate. Able and original young officers remain in subordinate positions, worn down by the weight of inertia above. Generals are on the average about sixty years old, though Hitler has been able to discover men of the necessary caliber for high command who are in their forties. The estimable old gentlemen who reach positions of responsibility are not progressives, nor do they favor change. In fact, they have a record of having turned down virtually every military invention of the past century until long after it had been adopted elsewhere. And none of these men have been affected as yet by the weeding-out policy which has cut out much military deadwood in the lower ranks.

Probably the weakest part of our entire war system is the lack of provision for cooperation between the services. This has always been a hard military problem, but it has been solved by the Germans and to a considerable extent by the Russians and Japanese. Germany operates under a General Staff which has direction of all three branches. Its best officers are equally at home in the air, on the land, and at sea and are capable of commanding operations in all three services. It has the reality of unified command, with one officer having power to give orders to all units engaged in a given campaign.

Contrast this unity with the situation in the American armed forces. At Pearl Harbor the navy had the duty of long-range air and surface-vessel reconnaissance and of distant submarine and close-in surface-warship patrol. Both services had intelligence officers. Part of the mine-

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laying was the duty of the navy, part that of the army mine-planter service. Nearby air reconnaissance was the job of the army, as was the maintenance of shore fortifications and anti-aircraft guns. The defense duties of the two services continually overlapped; yet there was little or no exchange of information of vital importance. The army did not know what the navy was doing or failing to do, and the navy was equally in the dark as to the intentions of the army. Nor did officers in either service have the background of education and training necessary to an appreciation of the other's problems. Few would probably have wanted to acquire such a background, for the two groups have been notoriously unfriendly, and joint maneuvers have often produced more recrimination than coordination. In the army, provincialism is so pronounced that officers think mainly, not of their country, or even of the army, but of their own particular branch.

Some machinery has been set up to correct this condition, but it is pitifully inadequate. A few naval and army officers have attended the War College of the other service, but they are men of limited influence. In Washington three joint boards composed of higher army and navy officers deal with situations presenting problems to both services, but their functions are largely advisory and they do not in any sense represent coordinated planning. Real issues arousing sharp differences of opinion which make agreement difficult are generally dropped. Naval district commanders are supposed to work with army men of equal rank. In actual practice the connection is so slight that effective cooperation is almost wholly dependent upon the personal relations of the commanders involved. Neither is supreme in case of disagreement. When relations are not cordial, the result may well be—as at Pearl Harbor—catastrophe.

The remedy for these evils probably does not lie in drastic action, since sudden and unaccustomed changes tend to disrupt such efficiency as there is. Nevertheless, the system has to be changed. Naval and military men in the future should be given a general education in all the arts of war, and our inadequate joint boards should be at once replaced by a supreme General Staff similar to that of Germany. With the appearance of commanders competent to direct operations in more than one field, divided command and responsibility can be made a thing of the past. The haphazard organization of both the Department of the Navy and the Department of War, especially the latter, is knotted in red tape and would make a shining target for any efficiency expert. Promotion systems of both services need to be overhauled, and civilians, afflicted by neither intra-service nor inter-service jealousies, should help in the process. Pearl Harbor should have removed much of the smug complacency not only of the services but of the public as well. If it has not done so, our case is hopeless.

Jesse Jones, Reluctant Dragon

BY DWIGHT MACDONALD

I

My whole working philosophy is summed up in a simple rule. If you buy something for a dollar and sell it for a dollar and a quarter, you can't lose.—JESSE JONES.

THE Texas millionaire whom President Roosevelt, after two months of hesitation, made chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in the spring of 1933 has received a good deal of journalistic attention recently. By now almost everybody knows that Jesse Jones, as Secretary of Commerce, Federal Loan Administrator, and boss of the RFC, is probably the third most powerful individual in the country (or the second, if Nelson turns out to be a flash in the pan); that he is the mightiest state capitalist we have yet produced, an economic emperor who rules over one-third of the nation's home mortgages, 30 per cent of all railroad securities issued since 1932, 7 per cent of the stock of the country's insured banks, and about half of the total new war plant built since May, 1940; and that his RFC at the end of 1941 had war commitments totaling five and a half billions. By now most people are also beginning to realize that Jesse Jones has made an appropriately gigantic mess of the vital sectors of the war program intrusted to him, that he has played in with big business in financing—or rather in *not* financing—plant expansion and has failed disastrously to build up the stockpiles of rubber and tin he was supposed to amass. What I want to consider in these articles is not so much the fact of this bungling as the reasons for it, and especially what these reasons indicate about our present war-production program as a whole.

For all the multiplication of his titles, Jesse Jones still draws his power primarily from his autocratic control of the RFC. The development of the RFC, in peace and in war, is the history of a paradox: on the one hand, the breakdown of post-1929 American private capitalism has reached such proportions that the RFC has been forced—and I think "forced" is the word for it—to expand its sphere enormously, to assume the most unheard-of powers; on the other hand, Jones has administered the RFC

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within the framework of the old system, and thereby altered the balance of financial power within that framework, but has made a surprisingly small dent in the status quo in general. Jesse Jones may be a dragon, but he is a reluctant dragon when it comes to making any positive use of his vast powers. And like most dragons he exists chiefly to guard a pile of gold.

The RFC began, under Hoover, as a pure *lending* agency. Under Roosevelt, it soon also assumed the role of investor, buying the stock of banks—instead of lending them money which they, in their enfeebled condition, might have found hard to repay—and thus getting a voice in their management. Nor was it long before the RFC became a *competitor* of the private banks, using the threat of its huge lending power to drive interest rates down. Finally, since August, 1940, the RFC has been forced to become an *entrepreneur,* investing its own money in its own war plants. This extension into one field of finance after another has not been because "we planned it that way." Quite the contrary; so far as the record shows, the White House has been as wary of the explosive potentialities of the RFC as has Jones: in 1937, when the economic system seemed to be staggering to its feet again, Roosevelt ordered the RFC to wind up its affairs as speedily as possible, an order he had to rescind early in 1938 after the economy returned to a prone position; and it is significant that Roosevelt has never appointed a New Dealer as director of the RFC.

One way the RFC might have altered the status quo, for instance, would have been by providing capital for small business. Jones has not only refused to let the RFC do this but has managed to prevent anyone else from doing it. In 1938 William O. Douglas, then head of the SEC, proposed a chain of federal loan banks to provide funds for small enterprises. Correctly scenting in this plan an attempt to by-pass the RFC, Jones headed it off by lobbying through Congress the Glass-Steagall bill broadening the RFC's lending powers. He used these powers with such restraint, however, that a year later Senator Mead introduced a bill which would have practically forced the RFC to make loans to little business. Jones used his considerable influence with Congress to get the Mead bill killed. "A great majority of the people who came to us after Secretary Roper's little-business conference," he told the Senate committee studying the bill, "were people with ideas and promotion schemes." In a more innocent age of capitalism, ideas and schemes were considered quite respectable, but from his long experience in the RFC Jones has found that men with ideas and no capital are not such good credit risks as men with capital and no ideas; and his inflexible resolve has always been to keep the RFC on a "sound," that is, a profitable, basis—whatever "profit" may mean when all the money is government money. Jones has pushed Wall Street around on occasion, as in the recent Arkansas state-bond issue, which the RFC took away from a private syndicate. But these are the struggles of competitors, not of radically different systems. Jesse has never challenged the rules of the game.

The conflict between the RFC's powers and opportunities and the philosophy of its master has been sharpened by the war to a point that would be comic were it not so terribly serious for all of us. For the most significant difference between our present war economy and that of 1917-18 is not to be found in price controls, priorities, baby bonds, or one-man control of production, all of which had their parallels in the last war, but in the little-publicized fact that this time it is largely government capital that is financing the enormous plant expansion in steel, aluminum, aircraft, and other war industries.

This financing was handled almost entirely by Wall Street in the last war. The government's Capital Issues Committee, set up by the Federal Reserve Board early in 1918, was a sort of financial priorities board, regulating the flow of new security issues but supplying no funds itself. The only even remote parallel to what is happening in this war was the War Finance Committee—on which, by the way, Hoover modeled the RFC—which was founded May 20, 1918, partly to take over the functions of the Capital Issues Committee and partly to extend government credit where private funds were not available. But this second power was scarcely exercised: by the end of the war the WFC had lent less than $50,000,000, of which $20,000,000 went to Bethlehem Steel, then as now an Oliver Twist for government money. In the three years 1917-19 all branches of the federal government spent only $500,000,000 on new war plant, and this when $2,500,000,000 was spent on new plant throughout the country in the single year 1918.

Contrast these statistics: from May, 1940, to date the government has spent or earmarked $8,600,000,000 for new industrial plant. This is 80 per cent of the total capital going into such expansion and 40 per cent of the value placed by private industry on its entire plant in 1939. *This* war is clearly public property, and as state capitalist No. 1, Jesse Jones figures prominently in the process. The RFC's Defense Plant Corporation accounts for about $3,000,000,000 of the government's new plant. And in addition Jones has been in charge of certain other vast undertakings without any parallel in the First World War. By November, 1941, various Jones corporations had made commitments of over a billion and a half for the purchase of reserve stockpiles of tin, rubber, chrome, manganese, cork, silk, nitrate of soda, etc., while another half-billion of RFC money had gone to England in loans on British-owned American securities. In the last war loans to England and accumulations of raw materials were strictly private property.

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No doubt many a Republican is convinced this is all a New Deal plot to socialize industry. Unfortunately it is not. The Administration has encroached on the domain of private enterprise—the preservation of which Roosevelt has formally announced is one of our war aims—with the utmost reluctance, yielding grudgingly to bitter necessity. "The government has hesitated to invest huge sums in new plants," comments the conservative *United States News* for January 23. "Both at the White House and in industry there was a wish to create as small a government-owned plant as possible. This explains, in part, the slow motion with which the defense program got under way." The result is a policy which has been timid, provisional, aimless, planless—a policy whose fitting executor is a man like Jesse Jones.

When the defense program was launched, the Administration and business both apparently assumed that plant expansion would be financed, as in 1917, by private funds. The whole summer of 1940 was consumed in the argument over terms, an argument that has turned out to be largely meaningless. When capital's sitdown strike finally forced through Congress in October the five-year-amortization provision, everyone expected a flood of private funds to pour into war plant. President Houston of the American Bankers' Association estimated at the time that the banks had available more than five billions for defense lending. Congress made defense contracts assignable as collateral for loans, the first government contracts so privileged in over a century. Still the borrowers hung back. In November, 1940, the RFC announced it would make loans to defense manufacturers at 1½ per cent interest. The banks were indignant at this cut-price competition, but they might have saved their emotions. Industry has shown no more eagerness to borrow from the government than from the banks: to date the total loans made by the RFC under this arrangement have only reached the relatively trifling sum of $300,000,000. The difficulty went too deep to be cured by either liberal amortization terms or low interest rates. The plain fact was that private business hesitated to invest capital in new war plants because of its quite justified fear of the post-war effects of this expansion on private capitalism.

The formula which solved the problem was worked out by Emil Schram, who took the chairmanship of the RFC when Jones resigned to become Federal Loan Administrator. On August 20, 1940, the formation of an RFC subsidiary named the Defense Plant Corporation was announced, its purpose being vaguely and modestly defined as to "perform miscellaneous financing tasks for which there is no other provision." The formula is a simple one: the DPC advances to private corporations the funds with which to erect new steel mills, machine-tool shops, or what not, or to build additions to existing plants; the plant thus built is the property of the DPC and is leased by the DPC to the private corporation in question, which generally has an option to buy the plant after the war if it wants to. Thus the state assumes all the entrepreneurial risk, and the private corporation can buy the plant later on if it looks profitable. The bulk of construction in steel, aluminum, and other basic industries has gone up under the DPC formula.

Jesse Jones

Nor is this all, or even the half of it. The scale on which the RFC has so far intervened in the workings of the American economy is nothing compared to the scale on which it could intervene if it exercised the powers granted it since the war began. The RFC act signed by the President on June 25, 1940, gave the RFC authority (1) to lend money for war purposes to any corporation; (2) "when requested by the Federal Loan Administrator, with the President's approval," to buy, lease, or itself build plants for producing war materials; and (3) "if the President finds it necessary for a government agency to engage in such manufacture, to engage in such manufacture itself." A year later another RFC act was passed and signed which permits the RFC to form government corporations "to take any action deemed necessary to expedite the defense program." Just that, without qualification. Jones, who suggested this wording himself, testified that the act would give the RFC "the power to do whatever it lacked the power to undertake heretofore." The decision as to what activities are necessary "to expedite the defense program" is left in the hands of two men: the President—and the Federal Loan Administrator. "If we pass the bill," said Representative Wolcott, ranking Republican on the House Banking Committee, "the Congress might as well fold up as far as any direction of defense activity is concerned." Indeed, the power of the purse, traditional safeguard of parliament against the encroachment of the executive arm, has rarely been more completely surrendered than in these two RFC acts. From its inception the RFC has been free of direct Congressional control, getting its funds from the Treasury; in 1938 it was empowered to finance itself by selling its bonds and notes direct to the public, and has not since then been included in the budget; it has its own accountants and is "entirely free from audit by the General Accounting Office." The last two RFC acts have

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struck the remaining Congressional shackles off this giant of state capitalism. "This bill," said Mr. Wolcott, "would make it possible to establish a fascist state in America."

Republicans are not the only people who have seen in Jesse Jones and his RFC a potential base for fascism within the Administration. There is no question that his vast powers could be used in that direction, and that certain of his traits—his autocratic methods, his preference for personal government, his itch to expand his sphere of influence—are not reassuring. But I should say that there is a good deal more of Chamberlain than of Schacht in Jones, that he is a prime example of what Guenter Reimann calls "the conservative man," neither a reactionary nor a fascist but rather "a lover of the status quo," a *rentier* type whose interests are "the maintenance of property rights, especially the value of money" ("Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences"). He has not used his war-time powers in a socially progressive way, but neither has he used them to extend political control over the economy in a fascist direction. He has, in fact, not used them positively at all. He is a very reluctant dragon.

[*In a second article Mr. Macdonald will discuss Jesse Jones as a person, the sources of his power, and the effect of his policies on the war program.*]

Leaders, Not Ghosts

BY J. ALVAREZ DEL VAYO

CONTRADICTORY as it may seem, at no time since the fall of France has the possibility that the war could be lost been so seriously considered as during the last few weeks. Military critics, known for their cautious judgment, are warning the public against the danger of assuming that the democracies, in the very nature of things, are already assured of victory. It sounds contradictory because this rude awakening comes just two months after America's entrance into the war and when, for the first time since the opening of hostilities in Europe, the German armies are retreating under the impact of Russia's lunging drive. Instead of experiencing a new feeling of security and confidence, people of sensitive political perceptions are beginning to fear that within three months the democracies may find themselves in the most difficult position they have faced since the Germans entered Paris.

It is not so much the anticipation of precise military events that creates this concern as the conviction that between next spring and autumn Hitler will employ the whole power of the Axis to establish himself in a position from which it will be infinitely harder for the Allies later to dislodge him. Suppose, for instance, that he flings against Russia the last man and machine that he can muster, and that Japan, having completed its task in the southwestern Pacific, strikes at the same time at Siberia. All the immense advantage achieved by the Russian counter-offensive this winter and by the entry of the United States into the war would suddenly be largely neutralized. The situation would then be like that of 1941: the bulk of Europe lost, and the possibility of effective action reduced to an effort to save England from a Nazi invasion. Should Hitler succeed in crushing Russia, thus eliminating the threat of a powerful enemy in his rear, the Allies' hope of opening a second front in Western Europe would vanish. An entire year would have been lost.

No doubt a year seems only a minute in the complacent imagination of some of the lesser statesmen intrusted with the task of guiding the democracies to victory. With delight they have embraced the theory that a long war is inevitable. It is like giving themselves a blank check in order to make up for their inability to act rapidly and intelligently.

In the mouths of such people the argument that the war must be long becomes one of the greatest obstacles to victory. Why, for instance, grow excited because in the field of political warfare months and months elapse without any serious attempt to accomplish something worthy of the seriousness of the issue? With a long war ahead everything can be organized with moderate speed. There is time for every kind of experiment. Broadcasts to Europe can still be casual and ineffective. The subjugated people of the Continent can continue their pathetic daily struggle against the Nazi invaders, living on hope until the hour shall at last arrive when the democracies can offer them something more heartening than eulogistic phrases in occasional official messages and speeches. Dukes and archdukes can be encouraged in their dream of monarchical restoration. The most fanciful plans for a restored balance of power can be worked out in collaboration with the Eckhardts of every nationality. Acting President Castillo of Argentina can be left quietly to himself until by some natural process he falls under the spell of hemispheric unity and decides to recompense the democracies for their benevolent attitude toward pro-Axis dictators. In the course of a long war every momentous mistake can be rectified. It is comforting to be provided with so much time that one may indulge one's political inclinations, combine a dislike for Hitler

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with a tolerance of Franco or Pétain, and wait placidly until the world is finally freed from the totalitarian menace but also secured against the threat of any really progressive social trend.

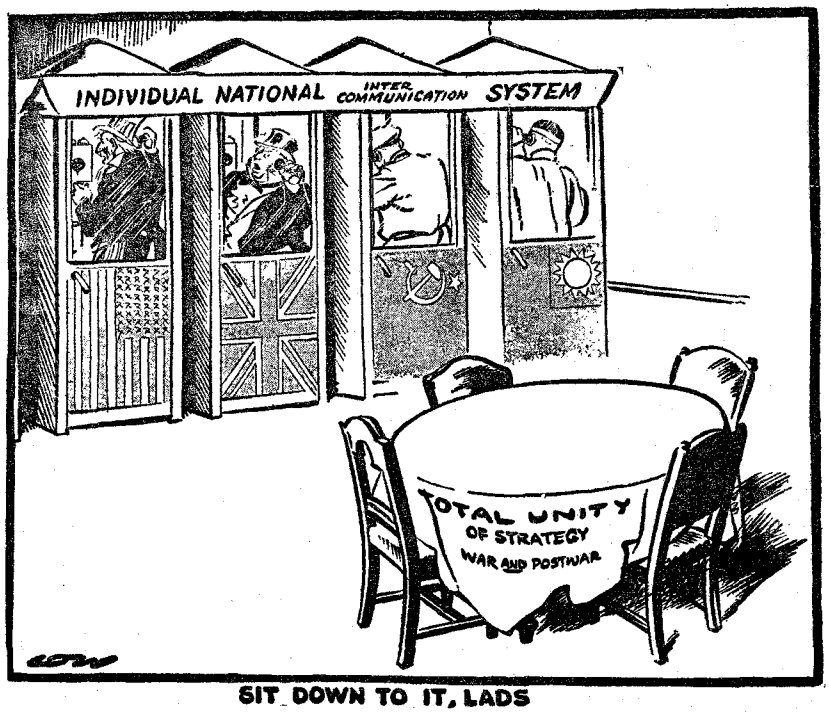
So think the saboteurs of victory whom this life-and-death struggle has incomprehensibly left in positions from which they can powerfully influence the outcome of the war. Appeasers from the bottom of their hearts but finding every day fewer outlets for their talents as one by one the reactionary regimes enlist on the side of Hitler, they now try to appease time. The best of them quiet their consciences by telling themselves that since the democracies have a vast superiority to the Axis in industrial resources and in men, it is merely a question of awaiting the year when the Allies will outdistance Hitler in the air, on land, and on the sea to such a degree that a mechanical solution will finally impose itself. They overlook the fact that the Axis fully understands the crucial value of time and may well be prepared to prolong the war for its own purposes.

Through lack of democratic initiative the theory of a long war may become a graver reality than some of those imagine who have accepted the idea of defeating Hitler by the mid-forties. To illustrate this danger, one can do no better than recall two modern examples of resistance long maintained in spite of inadequate means—China and Spain. The case of Spain is especially suited to our argument since the heroism and determination of the Loyalist army were thwarted by the limited extent of its territory. In Spain we did not enjoy the infinite spaces of China which make the loss of a few hundred miles an insignificant setback. But in spite of these limits the Spaniards demonstrated that when a people is determined not to surrender, even the worst air attacks will not bring defeat. What reason, then, to suppose that the Nazis could not hold out for many years in their own country and some of the occupied lands if next spring, with the help of Japan, they should inflict a major defeat on Russia?

The only victorious approach to the still tremendous problem of crushing the Axis is to face the possibility of a long war if it is necessary but at the same time to work with initiative and decision to prevent the waste of a single hour that might help the enemy intrench himself in positions from which it will be an almost superhuman task to dislodge him. The only victorious attitude is to understand the revolutionary character of the war and to be ready to risk anything except a Hitler triumph.

Unhappily, up to the present there is not a single decisive indication that the revolutionary character of the war has been understood, or that the necessity for countering the revolutionary strategy of the Axis with democratic revolutionary strategy has been seriously considered. In the last two months I have spoken to two men on their return from Europe who, owing to their positions, had opportunities to talk to high German officials and to feel out the reaction to the so-called democratic propaganda in Germany and the occupied countries. One, Gabriel Gonzales Videla—I may name him because he is not returning to his post—was the Chilean Minister to Vichy. He passed through New York on his way to his own country, where for a time he was a candidate for the presidential nomination. The second, whom I had better not name because he may return to Europe, besides being in France had visited Berlin and Rome. Both agreed on two things: first, that there are immense possibilities for immediate political warfare in Europe; second, that the political strategy used by the democratic agencies in charge of propaganda has been so inadequate and so unoriented that the Nazis comment on it with open amusement.

It is unfortunate that up to now, for various reasons, the field of political warfare has been abandoned entirely to the Axis powers, whether in Europe, Latin America, or Africa. But it is still worse that some of the men who have shown great courage and vision in vitalizing their respective countries in the present crisis do not yet realize that it is as important to fight Hitler and his associates on all fronts, with all possible means, and to encourage the subjugated peoples to rise, as it is to create a powerful industrial and military machine. Even some of the best democratic leaders are inclined to look upon political warfare as an invention of a few anti-



SIT DOWN TO IT, LADS

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fascist refugees obsessed with a vision of themselves mounted on a steed ready to lead their countrymen in a dramatic attempt to gain liberation.

Political war means more than blowing up a German train in France or sending machine-guns to the Yugoslav guerrillas. It means understanding that the battle between the fascist forces and the democracies can only end with the total destruction of the enemies of democracy wherever they are found. Political war may mean tearing from Franco the mask of a fictitious neutrality which for so long has played its part in preventing the Allies from planning the invasion of Europe through Spain. Political war may mean helping the Argentine democrats in their struggle against an administration that betrays the will of the nation and serves only Nazi ends. It may mean, for the sake of victory, opposing a group of capitalists or industrialists who have a vested interest in slowing up production. It may mean elaborating a program of post-war organization which allows for the substitution, if it proves necessary, of a Socialist economy for the old regime of private capitalism; it may mean planning the economic and political organization of the world on principles so large-minded that millions of men and women now in the midst of the struggle will be inspired with the conviction that they are fighting for something higher than the preservation of an obsolete and contradictory way of life.

Conceived in these long-range terms, political war cannot be left to men incapable of bold initiative and hostile to the use of genuinely popular methods, men who year after year have carried out a policy of capitulation, who think only in terms of preserving the old order. You and I would be amazed to find any of the few remaining liberals or democrats in Germany or Italy employed in the Foreign Office or in any other agency engaged in political warfare. But it seems perfectly natural and proper to find in corresponding departments in the democratic governments men who, before Italy was involved in the war, adored Mussolini, who now like Pétain, and who before 1939 would have been delighted to make a deal with Hitler. The Englishman in the street, and the Englishman in the House of Commons, cannot understand why a democracy at war can break with a hundred traditions, accept the most radical system of taxation, dismiss admirals, replace generals, and yet be unable to throw out the half-dozen presumptuous foreign-policy "experts" who have succeeded in paralyzing Britain's political action abroad; or why a Sir Samuel Hoare cannot be replaced by someone who at least would not excite the cynicism and mockery of a Serrano Suñer.

The world has gone to pieces, not because the so-called experts in foreign policy were not given a chance to prove their ability to avert a clash between the Axis and the democracies, but because they were permitted year after year to attempt an impossible reconciliation. If on the eve of Munich Sir Horace Wilson, Neville Chamberlain's adviser, and indeed the whole technical staff of the British Foreign Office, had disappeared overnight and been replaced by a coal miners' leader who had had no experience whatever in foreign affairs but who would have said "No" to Hitler, Great Britain's interests would have been better served.

The first requisite for successful political war is a leadership with political vision. Some sort of high command should be established to deal directly with all matters relating to political strategy; the paralyzing influence of officials who can think only in terms of departmental routine should be ended forever. Then, if the question of ending the scandalous farce of Spanish neutrality should arise, the agency to decide what course to follow would not be the British ambassador at Madrid or the "experts" of the Spanish Division at the Foreign Office but the special council intrusted with the conduct of political war. If it were found necessary to send one or a hundred political agents to the Continent or to Latin America, no routine official of the Visa Division would be allowed to decide whether or not the required documents would be provided. The decision would rest with the council for political warfare. If ten additional radio stations were required for broadcasting to occupied countries, negotiations concerning them would not drag out for months. The council for political warfare would have the authority to requisition such facilities immediately, and for twenty-four hours a day, if necessary.

After reading even the summarized accounts of the recent debate in the House of Commons, one cannot doubt that in the end the people will impose the revolutionized conception of the war that a democratic victory requires. The people cannot run the risk of losing to Hitler, and at any moment they may react with unsuspected energy. In spite of the admirable British calm and the remarkable sense of responsibility of British public opinion, politically educated as nowhere else in the world, the people are demanding that the government cleanse itself of the appeasers left with it from the epoch of great errors. Not even the immense prestige of a Churchill will suffice to silence them. The clamor for a shake-up in the Cabinet decreased a little when anxiety about the fate of Moscow and Leningrad gave place to the satisfaction of seeing the Russian armies take the initiative and throw the enemy back, but it has increased again with the aggravation of the situation in Singapore. It is a state of mind which rebels against the idea that while the nation is required to make the greatest sacrifices of all time, men whom people of liberal spirit do not trust are kept in posts of responsibility.

On the other hand people have not forgotten what has happened in Europe during the past two years. The example of France is there, alive, as a terrible warning.

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Generals and admirals, politicians who had claimed a monopoly of patriotism, sold out the French people in a gesture of capitulation as useless as it was shameful. People do not want to have even as the head of a post office a vulgar rascal like Laval, capable by temperament of betraying his trust, or a man of the type of Neville Chamberlain, capable of ruining his country out of stupidity. People want to see directing the war men able to win it, if possible in one year, if not, in ten years —but able to win.

On the other hand, people, and I refer to the great majority of the men and women enlisted in the cause of democracy, want to see at the head of their country men who they need not fear will betray the peace after they have won the war. Everybody who goes around today in the United States or who has contacts with the people in Europe knows how passionately the public is interested in the social, economic, and international organization of tomorrow, perhaps even more than in the day-by-day progress of the war. This interest has nothing to do with our heritage from the last war. It is a mixed feeling of hope and of fear, of doubt about the stand of the democratic governments on those problems and of savage determination not to allow themselves to be robbed of the peace. Never before did the Napoleonic theory that every war brings its own revolution find such clear confirmation. And the people in England and everywhere else ask themselves what kind of peace they can expect from all the Sir John Simons who still survive politically. I shall never forget hearing, the other day, an intelligent American woman say that if by touching an electric button the Nazi armies could be annihilated tomorrow and Hitler and his gang destroyed, the peace for which we are fighting would in that moment be lost.

This uneasiness is shared by millions of people in every continent—in Latin America by the masses that suspect a monstrous marriage between democracies and reactionary dictatorships, in Europe by everyone who has seen the democracies courting the worst accomplices of Hitler. The sinister shadow of appeasement reaches out beyond the war and darkens the outlook for a real peace.

To the degree in which the military situation again deteriorates, the clamor for vigorous democratic leadership will be heard with increasing vehemence. It is not an empty demand. It is a demand for action, for matching at last the revolutionary character of the Nazi strategy by those great, audacious plans and enterprises that in the end must mean just one thing: to take away the initiative from Hitler; to attack and, without neglecting a single front, military or political, to bring the war to the battlefield on which it must finally be won—the battlefield of Europe. It is the invasion of Europe by the armies of the democracies sustained by the revolt of the conquered peoples, invasion through Spain, through Italy, wherever it is possible, without any hesitation or scruple regarding regimes which are in the service of Hitler; that is what the people demand, determined not to sacrifice the will to victory to the complacent acceptance of a long war.

Ogpu at Work

BY RICHARD H. ROVERE

TWO weeks ago *The Nation* published a letter from Dr. Frank Kingdon urging that the Soviet government be called upon to explain its action in spiriting away two respected leaders of the Polish Socialist Party, Heinrich Ehrlich and Victor Alter. From reputable sources in Mexico comes further evidence that Stalin's foreign agents, unlike the Red Army, are less eager to fight Nazis than anti-Communist radicals. An atmosphere of imminent *attentat* hangs over a refugee colony in a remote quarter of Mexico City, where five men who fled Hitler's terror in Europe are being shadowed and threatened by Stalin's secret police. They are Gustav Regler, a German novelist who fought valiantly for the Loyalists during the Spanish Civil War and was for some time political commissar of the International Brigades; Victor Serge, French author and former editor of several Anarchist and Communist publications; Marceau Pivert, once secretary to Léon Blum, an official in the Popular Front regime, and the head of a small socialist party in pre-war France; Julian Gorkin, a leader of Spain's P. O. U. M.; and Grandiso Muniz, an obscure Spanish journalist. They are men of varying character, prominence, and ideas, but each, according to his lights, has played some part in the fight against fascism.

The campaign that has put these men in daily fear of their lives began a few months ago when one André Simone returned to Mexico from the United States. In Mexico, as in this country, Simone represents himself as a noted French journalist who has recently published two books on the war. Actually, he is Otto Katz, an Ogpu agent who once bought up European newspapers for the Communist International. He is working in Mexico as an Ogpu agent, and his present assignment, apparently, is to stir up public sentiment against Regler, Serge, and the others. Having started an inflammatory press attack upon them, Katz has now organized "vigilante committees" to deal with these men, whom he calls "the leaders of the Nazi fifth column in Latin America."

Character assassination in the press of Mexico, where political passions are easily touched off, is a matter to be taken far more seriously than it is in this country. Katz's campaign has been unusually violent and provocative. First there appeared a few articles in the official Communist press describing the men as Hitler agents. The same description, in fatuous detail, was printed in *El Popular*, a trade-union daily of wide circulation, in

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the form of a report from the Communist Party. Then, on January 15, the most daring fraud of all appeared in *Excelsior*, the largest and most respected paper in Mexico. Under a Washington date line, a writer who signed himself John Willes claimed that some sort of secret-police meeting held in Washington had singled out Gorkin, Pivert, and Serge as "tools of the Nazis" and "dangerous obstacles to hemisphere solidarity." Mr. Willes, who may exist but cannot be located in Washington or Mexico, reported further that "in Washington" it was believed that the task of checking these men and their followers demands "the reciprocity and cooperation . . . of the police forces of the North American continent." He went on to say that the Rio conference, then about to start, should, in Washington's view, decide just what measures were needed to stop these leaders of Hitler's pre-invasion army.

No official circles in Washington have been known to express an opinion about any of the five devils of Mr. Willes's piece. Fiction from beginning to end, the story was an attempt to use the prestige of the United States government for partisan purposes in which this country has no interest whatever. It was, moreover, so clearly an incitation to violence that if unusual precautions were not being taken, the Ogpu would hardly need to bother itself further about the matter: it would be difficult to blame any ordinary Mexican patriot for dealing directly with men accused by United States authorities and a responsible Mexican newspaper of being active traitors.

If these five men, falsely charged with being fascist agents, are saved from assassination in Mexico, they still have death from another source to fear. For, on the basis of the *Excelsior* story and others like it, a resolution to deport them, sponsored by a Communist deputy, is making headway in the Mexican legislature. If they are forced to leave Mexico, they can only fall into the hands of the Nazis in Europe or elsewhere, for our State Department will not grant them entry here.

It is important that these men be saved from death or deportation, and the Mexican government will soon have in its hands demands from many prominent Americans that they receive full protection. But the incident raises another important issue. Russia has built up over the years an international force of gangsters to deal with real and imagined enemies. It is still functioning, not only against Nazism but against honest men and women who have at one time or another incurred the displeasure of the Russian dictator and his petty bureaucrats. If, as Ralph Bates and others have recently argued, the Soviet Union now deserves the full cooperation and trust of the liberal movement, it can go a long way toward winning respect by turning the efforts of its agents against the real foes of democracy. It will be a good deal easier to accept Russia as a genuine ally when the Russians have the good sense to call off their Otto Katzes.

Everybody's Business

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

Have We Enough Power?

AMONG the basic factors of our war potential, electric power ranks with steel-making capacity, oil resources, and the supply of skilled labor and machine-tool equipment. Nor does its importance nowadays lie only in our dependence on it to turn the wheels of industry; more and more the metal and chemical industries are absorbing huge amounts of power in electrolytic processes. Aluminum is extracted from bauxite by these means, magnesium conjured out of sea water. The normal method of producing chlorine gas, an essential raw material for a host of industries, is by passing an electric current through cells containing brine. Important by-products of this process are caustic soda, which the rayon industry uses in large quantities, and hydrogen. Tinplate can be manufactured electrolytically, and since this method economizes the use of tin it may be widely substituted for the usual hot-dip process.

It is fortunate that in the matter of electric power we have a big edge on our enemies. Just how big this is, it is difficult to say, however, as the last reliable figures of German, Italian, and Japanese installed capacity are for the year 1936. Since then, information on this subject has been treated as a military secret. The United States today has something over 44 million kilowatts of installed capacity in public utilities, and industrial undertakings possessing their own power plants account for at least another 10 million. German capacity in 1936 was a little over 15 million kilowatts, Italian 5.36 million, and Japanese 6.77 million. Both the Germans and the Japanese are known to have made very considerable additions since, but allowing generously for this expansion, the total capacity of the three Axis powers is almost certainly less than 40 million kilowatts.

The question can also be approached from the angle of total annual power production. In this country in 1941 total production was in the neighborhood of 205 billion kilowatt-hours, and if we add estimates for Canada and Britain we have a figure for three of the United Nations alone of 273 billion kilowatt-hours. Here again figures for the Axis nations can only be guessed at on the basis of very incomplete data. But giving them the benefit of every doubt, and including a very substantial amount for the power output of the occupied countries, we arrive at an estimate of 200 billion kilowatt-hours.

The fact that we can outdistance our enemies in the matter of power does not mean, however, that the needs of our gigantic armament program are amply covered. For some months the Federal Power Commission and some OPM experts have been warning that a power shortage is on the horizon. In a report issued last September the Federal Power Commission pointed out that peak demands for power were proving well above anticipations and continued:

> It is significant that the major part of these underestimates occur in important war-material areas. Since capacity additions are scheduled on the basis of forecasts made two or more years

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in advance of experienced loads, it is obvious that serious power shortages may develop in some areas if the longer-range forecasts contain cumulative errors of the magnitude that have occurred for three-month periods.

After the United States entered the war and the greatly expanded production program was announced, Thomas R. Tate, director of the National Defense Power Staff, told a Congressional subcommittee that there would be a power shortage of around 2 million kilowatts this year and between 3 and 4 million in 1943. As a remedy he proposed reconditioning of existing equipment, expediting of new installations, and rapid construction of interconnecting transmission lines so that resources can be pooled and no capacity allowed to remain idle while other plants are overburdened.

This expectation of shortage is not shared by the electric-power industry, whose spokesman C. W. Kellogg, president of the Edison Electric Institute, stated on January 22 that the outlook was reassuring with a present surplus of 9 million kilowatts of generating capacity above the greatest demand for power and with the construction of an equal amount in prospect during the next three years. In support of this view Mr. Kellogg quoted a recent report of the Federal Power Commission which found that the energy consumed in the filling of government orders during 1941 totaled 7,257,913,975 kilowatt-hours while the total disbursements for national defense were $12,531,000,000. This indicates a ratio of six-tenths of a kilowatt-hour per dollar of defense expenditure. Thus, assuming total war expenditure reaches the budget figure of $56 million in 1943, the increase in electric output directly for the increased war load should run from 32 to 35 billion kilowatt-hours.

One possible objection to this calculation is its underlying assumption that the ratio of energy consumed to war goods produced will remain unchanged. This seems unlikely. During 1941 a great deal of our defense expenditure was for building new plants and new camps. Now those plants are getting into production, and it seems probable that a million dollars spent on manufacturing shells or tanks or planes is going to give rise to a greater consumption of energy than the expenditure of the same sum on building, where the ratio of labor costs to total value is high. Moreover, a significant part of the new production will be in industries employing electrolytic processes with a larger than average consumption of power. It takes 10 kilowatt-hours to produce a pound of aluminum, 12 for a pound of magnesium. With aluminum now costing 15 cents per pound, the production of one dollar's worth of this metal requires 66⅔ kilowatt-hours. A total production of 200 million pounds—the latest program—will call for 20 billion kilowatt-hours annually.

It is certain, in any case, that last year the percentage growth in output of energy for public use was more than twice the percentage increase in installed capacity. For the twelve months ending November 30, 1941, total production was up 15.5 per cent over that for the twelve months ending November 30, 1940. Installed capacity in publicly and privately owned electric utilities rose last year by 2,850,000 kilowatts, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, or an increase of under 7 per cent. Scheduled construction of new capacity for 1942 is somewhat greater, but unless there is a sharp reversal in the present trend of consumption, the industry's reserve margin will be much narrowed, if it does not disappear altogether. Already there is talk of rationing domestic and trade consumers, and should this become necessary the private utilities are going to feel the effect in their earnings, for while the wholesale users of current may provide their bread it is the householder and the shopkeeper who spread the butter and jam on it.

In the Wind

WHEN THE PRESIDENT issued his order against racial discrimination in government and defense work, a great many Negroes sought employment in Washington's new and expanded agencies. Those whose abilities passed muster were notified that they were in the employ of the government and on its pay roll, but that they would have to wait for a definite assignment before starting work. Like all other successful applicants, they were sent to "pools" throughout the city to await selection by department heads. Almost none of the Negroes have been selected, however, and most of the pools now have far more Negroes than whites. Last week a War Department executive asked for a secretary of specified abilities from the department's pool. No white girl qualified, but three Negroes did. The post has not been filled and presumably will not be until a white girl is found for it.

A CLERICAL CORRESPONDENT has written *America*, the Catholic weekly, inquiring why the rubber priorities which prohibit the manufacture and sale of tires to civilians have not been applied to other goods, of whose use the church disapproves.

SOCIALISTS IN SWEDEN have raised three million kroner to start a new anti-Nazi evening paper, *Aftontidningen*. The paper will attempt to counter the influence of *Aftonbladet*, Stockholm's only evening paper at present and a supporter of close relations with Germany.

FROM AN International News Service (Hearst) story in the Santa Barbara *News-Press*: "California newspaper publishers demanded at their fifty-fourth convention Saturday that all enemy aliens be removed from the West Coast as a defense precaution. Another resolution adopted urged the federal government to advertise in Eastern metropolitan newspapers that hysteria has not gripped the West Coast because of war."

AN ORGANIZATION called the Anti-Monroe Doctrine Society has been formed in Texas. Its policy is to open North and South America to free "white" European immigration; its motto is, "The whole Western Hemisphere must be inhabited by white people."

[*We invite our readers to submit material for In the Wind —either clippings with source and date or stories that can be clearly authenticated. The $5 prize for the best item received in January goes to R. B. of San Francisco for his story of the Associated Farmers' lobby published last week.*]

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A Native at Large

BY JONATHAN DANIELS

Rumors Are Symptoms

DON'T fault me if I'm scunnered," old fishermen say on the sand banks back of Hatteras. And sportsmen, who come every year to the village of bright-painted houses among the stunted live-oak trees and waterbushes for deep-sea fishing, understand that in the language of the shore they mean, "Don't blame me if I'm disgusted." I am not saying that. But a lot of rumors from beyond the beak of Hatteras, where enemy submarines have been engaged, began recently to filter through America. I am testifying that at least in that country which runs from Hatteras to the first mountains you cannot stop rumors by command.

It has been energetically attempted. Sharp words about the wickedness of rumors have come from people presumably in authority in army and navy and civilian forces. The good American, we are told, quickly turns a cold and challenging eye upon the neighbor who comes pouring out an exciting tale of an unannounced happening. On the West Coast, which is as far as you can get from Hatteras, legionnaires are flashing on such talkers a button bearing the inscription, "How do *you* know?" The button may temporarily silence the chagrined talker. But my observation is that he will find plenty of other listeners. Indeed, both the talk and the listening seem to be as prevalent among the multitude of officials in Washington as in any gossiping over any back fences anywhere in America—and generally just as unfounded and irresponsible.

Of course by this time it ought not to be necessary to prove to anybody that loose talk may be dangerous talk. The movie star standing in a real hole in a real ship dramatizes fact and not merely propaganda when she reports through the picture caption that it was talk which sent the torpedo accurately to its mark. Undoubtedly not all listeners are idle ones even if vastly more talking is done by conversationalists than by spies. There is real need of intelligence in the use of tongues. But I don't think all the danger comes from the silly people who just won't shut up. The first necessity is to keep facts which might aid and comfort him from the enemy, but another is the maintenance of the faith of the American citizen that he is getting all the facts he can be allowed to have from the standpoint of national safety, and that he is being kept informed about the worst news as well as the best.

News has become a necessity to him. No other people in the history of the world were ever taught to count upon it so much. But in war the American is not opposed to censorship. Indeed, he is enthusiastically and devotedly in favor of guarding his country's secrets from the Germans, the Italians, the Japs. The only problem in America for both the censors and the people is the terrifically difficult one of drawing the line between giving aid to the enemy and destroying confidence at home. Draw it an iota too far in the direction of news freedom, and the enemy may sink a ship. Draw it a mite too far in the direction of news suppression, and the people will cease to count on their newspapers and radios while the grapevine finds credulity.

I am no psychologist. It may be valuable in psychological warfare to keep the Germans in the dark about what happened to those submarines off Hatteras. But the Germans are not the only people subject to psychology. And secrecy about sinking submarines may work strangely around in the mind of America to suspicions of secrecy about sugar, to hoarding, and beyond sugar and hoarding to the whole realm of possibility in whispering. Indeed, it may lead to the loud rumoring which already has brought condemnation from those in command. Beyond the condemnation the fact remains that in America today no one else is quite so eagerly listened to as the man with the inside story that did not get into the papers—which in fact may have come out of thin air. He may be a fool, a menace, a loud-mouthed saboteur. His audience gathers in the hope of getting news which is denied.

Of course, some of it should be denied. But the prevalence of the rumors is the measure of the problem of maintaining confidence in a free press in the midst of the task of defending a free country. I am condemning nobody. Nobody should expect those who have the job to have solved the problem so soon. It is only important that we recognize that it is not solved. Slapping on essential censorship is one thing—the easiest thing. Preserving confidence in the agencies of information at home under censorship is another—the more difficult thing. We shall probably always have cockeyed rumors. But now is the time to recognize rumors as symptoms requiring treatment and not merely condemnation. Nothing could give more aid and comfort to the enemy than loss of confidence in news about their country and their war among the people of the United States.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

J. P. Popo, Esquire

BY GILBERT HIGHET

SO LITTLE has happened in my life, and most of it has been so boring, that I scarcely feel like writing it down. Only I have so few occupations now, with the house burned down and Agatha in the asylum, that it seems like a good way of filling in time. Besides, it will do something to complete the records of the Simpkin family, so far as they go. My cousin Slug likes to laugh at me because I think it is something to be a Simpkin; but he is a decent fellow in his way, and he can't mean it. After all, he is practically a Simpkin himself, although his mother did marry exogamously —she was the Duchess of Yeominster, or something like that. We seldom speak of it any more.

Anyhow, I was going over my scars the other day, and it struck me that after I was gone nobody would really know how I had got them, and how the Erickson creed had been lived by at least one of its fellows. Naturally I went to Erickson. It was quite old—founded by Leif Erickson, they said, although it was Dr. Mumbudget who really built it up, starting in 1885. I don't know what I should have done without Erickson, both in youth and afterward. The only real people I ever knew were Old Budgers, as we called ourselves. Of course, after I got thrown about the world a bit, I had to meet some people out of my own class. Two or three times, for business reasons, I was compelled to dine with a man who had been to some place called Princetown, but the deal didn't go through, and it is easy to see why. Then I used to hear a college at Boston spoken of, but there are so many such institutions there it is hard to differentiate between this, that, and the other. I once met a man from one of them who used "intimate" to mean "hint" and said things like "Whom is it from?" and that rather discouraged me from associating with people who were not Budgers. I always tried to be a Budger myself, and some thought I succeeded.

Father wasn't a Budger. He wasn't anybody, really. But he invented a thing called the automobile, which became very popular, almost a necessity in many households. I never cared about it myself. After I stroked the crupper of my first horse, I knew that was what I was meant for. I was to be a horseman, and a horseman I have remained. But I became chairman of the board after Father died, and it pays me a million or two every month; enough to make me forget Roosevelt, almost, and all he has done to what was once a half-decent country. Still, there's no use crying over spilt millions, is there? Funny, that's about the only thing I actually remember Father saying.

After he died I went on living as quietly as before. Most of my relatives were in private nursing-homes here and there, or working for America First, the Ku Klux Klan, and other earnest organizations. I was playing Eton fives three or four hours a day, which kept me busy, along with signing the checks my secretaries had ready for me every morning. But I knew I wasn't really living. I didn't begin to live until Mr. Popo took over the management of my affairs, and then of my private life, and at last of my horses and myself, so far as they were separate.

He was recommended to me by a pretty good Eton-fives player who had trimmed me a couple of times at the club; some odd name like Van Aschenhausen, and they said he was attached to the German legation, but I never paid much attention to gossip. He could certainly play Eton fives—his buttress work was almost miraculous. Anyhow, Mr. Popo turned up at my house next day. I was having some difficulty in talking, and I could get only one eye open at a time. He soon solved that. He massaged me a bit, all around the skull —one lobe of my brain has been missing since my first term at Erickson, and it sometimes gives me a little trouble—and over the right eye and round both gums. Then he gave me some special tea he brewed. I believe it was called sake, and it certainly made me feel better.

After that Mr. Popo, with his close-cropped accent, became an essential part of the household. Agatha, who had married me five or ten years earlier, soon learned that he had to be tolerated. Once I came home early from the club and found him in her room, but of course there was nothing in it. I asked him about it myself.

"I am so very, very sorry," he said. "I was teaching Mrs. Simpkin the rumba."

"Then why was she struggling?"

"Correction, please. She was not struggling." Mr. Popo sizzled so hard that a rainbow appeared in front of him. "She was mixing a rumba with a samba, excuse me. She does not yet know all the movements."

Naturally I understood, and I told him so. Agatha was rather touchy about it for a time, but quite soon she began to go in for the rumba seriously, and left home to study it professionally. I never liked dancing personally. Only scugs danced at Erickson.

Another interesting thing that happened was when Mr. Popo fired all my servants. I could never quite gather what was wrong with them, but he kept saying "very, very nice" and smiling and inhaling as if I had hurt his feelings. I didn't want to do that. However, fired the servants were, and he brought in some new ones whose names I could never get straight. There was one called Mtoto with very long arms, and another called Bojo, about eight feet high, and a third with some name like Hojotoho or Hirohito, who used to boss the others around. They all looked the same to me, but they were decorative, and they saved me a lot of trouble. My cousin Slug said it looked like a Mototalitarian state, but I never sympathized with his attitude. I laughed gently, and said "Hello, Slug, how's your lug?" That shut him up. Still, I was sorry to be rude, so sorry, so very, very sorry.

I found I was beginning to leave my investments to Mr. Popo, too. For some time I tried to save him the trouble of all that.

"My boy," I would say, "you are too fragile to handle these huge steel and manganese trusts."

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"If you please," he would reply, "Mr. Popo is Manganese himself, and he understands every kind of steel. Thank you so much, indeed to goodness. *So desu-ka.*" I never knew what that meant, but evidently they said it in Mr. Popo's circle.

He had been teaching me wrestling and various other exercises for a month or two. He knew I was keen about keeping fit. I generally spent the summer in Maine—it was a state which the Simpkins always rented for the summer, and I didn't see why I should give up the custom—but in the autumn of 1941 I was so worried by things I heard at the club that I came home early.

"You are home quite, quite early, and I am trying to help you," said Mr. Popo.

"I am sure you are doing your best, Mr. Popo," I answered. There was a curious noise from my study, a kind of rhythmical popping. Probably it was Tojo with his new vacuum-cleaner. I tried not to notice it.

"Thank you so terribly much. Will you deign to try a new exercise, especially designed for Simpkin-san by Mahatma in Tibet?" That is what he said, although I didn't properly follow him. I was listening to the Morse from my study, a thing I had learned at Erickson and somehow remembered. But it didn't make sense. The only words I could make out were Nichi Nichi, which sounded like the name of one of the maids. I judged it wasn't important and got down to the new exercise.

It was rather complicated. First I signed a paper he gave me. Then I took off all my clothes and put on a dressing-robe. Then he made me squat down in front of Father's picture, as if I'd been a Buddha, which I'm not. He gave me a kriss, one of those Oriental ornaments Mother hung around everywhere—some of them were very handsome. Then he showed me how to put it into my stomach and pull outwards. It felt rather strange, but more interesting than most exercises. I was just getting the feel of it when old Slug happened to drop in.

After that I didn't follow the trend of events. Slug shot Mr. Popo, though I can't think why. He was always an admirable servant, never tired, never in the least disorderly. Slug took the sword out of my stomach and ran me down to the hospital, saying he was so very, very sorry. I hope he was. He still has not told me why he deprived me of Mr. Popo's services. The affair is a mystery to me, in toto. An Old Budger would never have done anything so abrupt. If everyone were only Budgers, it would be so very, very nice.

Notes by the Way

NEW DIRECTIONS recently issued "The Real Life of Sebastian Knight," by Vladimir Nabokov ($3.50), in as pretty a package as I have seen for some time: a stout binding of glowing red burlap, attractive though rather fancy type, a jacket both clever and smart. The note on the jacket informed me that the author had "things deep and important to tell about the role of creative artists in a modern world that is basically hostile to art," and though that last phrase struck me as a crude and rather smug description of a subtle and ambivalent relationship, I turned eagerly to page 1.

The book tells the story of the narrator's attempt to discover the truth about his half-brother, Sebastian Knight, son of a Russian father and an English mother, who had become a famous British novelist. To this end the "I" of the story sets out to find the people who were intimate with Knight, particularly the two women in his life. As foil for his conception of a true biography he poses the official account by Knight's secretary and agent—a worthless book, full of misinformation and written only to exploit the fame of its subject. An excellent idea, an ingenious device, giving scope for profound and wide-ranging commentary on the artist and his relation to the world.

I'm sorry to report that through two readings I looked in vain for the "things deep and important" the author had to tell about an absorbing problem; moreover, I was so intent on having the publisher's promise fulfilled that I became increasingly annoyed at the incorrigible and, as it seemed to me, irrelevant cleverness of Mr. Nabokov. I learned of various episodes in the life of Sebastian Knight; the trouble was that they might have been incidents in the private life of any human being, and that for all its air of intimacy the tale dealt only with externals. Of the interior creative life of Sebastian Knight and of his relation to the world *as artist*—which we are led to believe is the point of Mr. Nabokov's story—I knew as little as before I opened the book. I felt as if I had been chasing a firefly—which lights up but does not illuminate.

At this point I learned that the story was supposed to parallel a chess game. I thereupon put the jacket note to one side and began all over again. As a tour de force, as an essay in cleverness for cleverness's sake, the story obviously demanded to be judged by quite other and less weighty standards.

Mr. Nabokov is a skilful writer; his pages rain conceits as numerous—and as perishable—as those thrown off by a Fourth of July rocket. But I personally find his cleverness, even as cleverness, a little over-ripe. It will bear one quick reading, not more, and a good deal of it seems, in cold print, as pretentious and dead as the quips of the fashionable writer-about-town whose conversation seemed so brilliant in the charged atmosphere of last week's cocktail party. Consider this typical sentence on page one—which first aroused my annoyance. It tells us that the name of the old Russian lady who is the first of the people canvassed by the narrator "was and is Olga Olegovna Orlova—an egg-like alliteration which it would have been a pity to withhold." The fact that 000 has a meaning in chess does not make the conceit or its elaborate wrappings—"was and is," "which it would have been a pity to withhold"—any the less pretentious. And it is only the first of many such.

If Mr. Nabokov intended his tale to be no more than a high-class detective story, the playing out of an intricate and sophisticated game, he has achieved moderate, though only moderate, success. If it was his intention, as the title implies and the jacket note proclaims, to explore and define the relation between the artist and the world, he has only proved that cleverness—which he not only possesses but seems to be possessed by—is not enough. As for Sebastian Knight, he remains unexhumed, and his hypothetical mound is heaped

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even higher with fake subtleties, pretentious curlicues, and the dazzling shards of Mr. Nabokov's conceits.

MARGARET MARSHALL

War Is Hell

FROM THE LAND OF SILENT PEOPLE. By Robert St. John. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $3.

MR. ST. JOHN'S moving and honest book is perhaps the grimmest piece of reporting yet to come out of the war. An eyewitness of the invasion of Yugoslavia and the evacuation of Greece, the author has put down "all that I saw and heard and smelled and just a bit of what I thought," and his story has the same quality of nightmare reality which makes unforgettable Ambrose Bierce's sketches of the Civil War. It is no book for people with weak stomachs.

Robert St. John was an Associated Press correspondent in Belgrade when Prince Paul's government signed the Tripartite Pact only to be thrown out by a coup d'état organized by the air force. The author calls it, however, "the diaper revolution," for the first manifestation was a strike by school children who expressed openly the anger they had heard muttered behind closed doors in their homes. The first days of regained freedom to voice hatred and contempt of the Axis were exhilarating, but doom was approaching. St. John was in the midst of the first air attack on Belgrade, which came simultaneously with von Ribbentrop's announcement of a state of war. Wave after wave of bombers came over and, opposed only by ground defenses, devastated the capital of the Yugoslavs with a thoroughness only comparable to that employed in the infamous raid against Rotterdam.

The Yugoslav government moved south, and the American correspondents tried to keep up with it, hoping thus to find the communication facilities which would enable them to get their story out. They never did succeed, and thus in the midst of a hell of bombs, machine-gunnings, wounds, hunger, and sleeplessness, they endured the newspaperman's peculiar inferno: they had a story of world-shaking proportions and no way of getting it to their papers.

Wherever St. John and his companions went, the Stukas followed. Through Sarajevo they made their way to the Adriatic coast and there, as unnautical a bunch as ever put to sea, procured a leaky fishing boat and set a course for Corfu. In spite of storms and Italian patrols they made it by some miracle. But in Corfu there were no communications, only more bombs. A small Greek ship took them to Patras, where almost as soon as they arrived the *Luftwaffe* swept down again. The huddled masses of refugees on the waterfront made a fine target. At Corinth the story was repeated. There Göring's men shot up and set on fire a hospital train crammed with wounded, and the smell of burning flesh hung heavily over the city as the author and three other newspapermen, one of them severely wounded, moved south to Argos to join the retreating Anzacs.

Finally they got to Cairo, and that, in a different way, was a nightmare too. Here was a desperately unreal world of international hotels, bowing flunkeys, old-fashioned military

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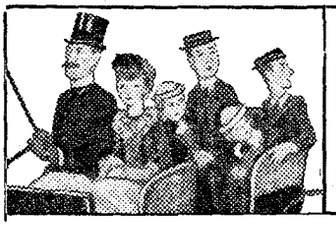

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• The Editors of *The Nation* will publish a Mid-Winter Book Number on February 21. Coming at the peak of the post-holiday sales upswing, this issue offers advertisers a timely oportunity to present meritorious new books to a nation-wide audience of book-lovers.

• The size of the magazine will probably be increased to forty pages for the Mid-Winter Book Number, permitting considerably greater space devoted to books than is usually available in an issue of *The Nation.*

• An early deadline—February 11 for *final* OK's or complete plates, is necessary where forward position is requested, since the central pages of the magazine will be printed on February 13. The usual deadline applies to space taken for the body of the magazine, with final copy required by February 16.

• A number of representative publishers have already reserved space in this literary issue. For information or to make reservations, write, telephone or wire the Advertising Department.

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etiquette, a world where immaculate Englishmen "were still trying to fight a war in the Kipling tradition." Here, too, at last, were communications, but with them censors who felt it their duty to protect American and British readers from the brutal truth about the Balkan débâcle.

Thus a story which compared the Greek evacuation with that of Dunkirk and explained why it was incomparably worse was blue-penciled until it conveyed exactly the opposite impression. St. John was glad to get away from Cairo, but he wasn't any more comfortable back in complacent New York, where the lecture chairman asked him not to make the war seem too horrible, not to upset the digestions of his audience.

KEITH HUTCHISON

Mr. Jolas

VERTICAL. Edited by Eugene Jolas. The Gotham Bookmart Press. $2.75.

THIS truly remarkable publication, a "romantic, cosmological, and mystic theory of ascent," is or is not worth the price of several zombies depending on whether or not you like zombies. If you find them too much, then this anthology should adorn your bookshelf, because it bears a positively extraordinary resemblance to the Zombie Proper, in both senses. It is tall—"poetry," Mr. Jolas announces, "is vertical." It is composed of such exotic combinations as Guillaume Apollinaire, Paul Claudel, Patrice de la Tour du Pin, Kay Boyle, Eugene Derwood, and Eugene Jolas. Also it is about as posthumous as the League of Nations and quite as internally internecine. I cannot think that there is anything more than a purely accidental explanation of the presence of a poem in imitation of William Blake by Richard Eberhart or a sonnet by Gerard de Nerval—yes, it's the good old Prince of Acquitaine.

Personally I suspect Mr. Eugene Jolas of an irresponsibility of vocabulary that could be mistaken either for charlatanism or pretentiousness. I ask Mr. Jolas what is a Romantic-Mystic Three-Fold Ascension, and if so how can he bring himself to use the English language as though it were hamburger? "Poetry," he continues, "must emphasize the creative urge toward a communal feeling for living . . . toward a liturgical-ritual renascence. Poetry must become a medium for the emancipation of the human personality by accentuating its voyage toward the invisible." I would like to tell a story. It is about a man who met a poem, and the poem was wearing an orange wig and gold-plated suspenders and was to all appearances inebriated and on the make. The man said to the poem: "Good poems must go home and go to bed." So the poem went on down the street still inebriated and still on the make because its aural faculties were not adjusted to that kind of language.

Surely Mr. Jolas knows that poems can be described and, sometimes, defined—by writing one—but they simply cannot be dictated to. Hitching poems to mystagogical stars discredits the poem and degrades the mystic. Thus the principal difficulty about most of the contributors to this anthology is that they are camelopards whose camel is not really mystical and whose leopard is not really poetical. I myself observe nothing memorable about such writing as: "Asteroids shot color-inebriated across the Milky Way. We saw a comet." Nor can I discern in Paul Claudel's austere and ecclesiastical condemnation of the Teutonic in his verses entitled "Thus Once More . . ." any element that elevates it above the commonplace in thought: nor is it any the less admirable a poem. For it is salutary that someone should point out to Mr. Jolas that poems demonstrably do not need superlative or even penetrating philosophies behind them in order to make them good: very few poets are also respectable philosophers; "nor," in the words of T. S. Eliot, "do I see any need for this thoroughgoing schizophrenia."

I can respect Mr. Jolas's determination to systematize his own speculations into a philosophy, even with an aeronautical nomenclature, but I cannot respect his efforts to ride this philosophy into public prominence on the backs of other writers. For what conceivable reason can there be for the inclusion, for instance, of a passage from The Cloud of Unknowing or an excerpt from Richard Jefferies in a Yearbook for Romantic-Mystic Ascension?

I can only suspect that Mr. Jolas is capitalizing on a category of ecclesiastical literature that has so far been able to keep its skirts clean of secular theory, and especially of secular theory with such pretentions as: "A mystical will is needed to ruin the fraudulent romanticism of totalitarian imperialism." The presence of orthodox Roman Catholic writers here does not detract from the general air of cosmological gesticulation. "We stand," Mr. Jolas concludes, "before the Era of the Paraclete." I wish to correct Mr. Jolas. We stand before the Era of Apollyon.

GEORGE BARKER

The Strategy of Planning

NATION AND FAMILY: THE SWEDISH EXPERIMENT IN DEMOCRATIC FAMILY AND POPULATION POLICY. By Alva Myrdal. Harper and Brothers. $4.

I HOPE that this book will be read by every American interested in any phase of the strategy and tactics of social planning. It appears at a time when the United States is making what will in all likelihood be a permanent change-over to large-scale planning of its economic and social institutions, but when long-range social planning is in danger of being smothered in the vortex of planning for war. Dr. Myrdal, a leading Swedish social scientist familiar with American problems, describes "with American problems in mind" the work of the Swedish Population Commission of 1935-38. It is the record of a successful national attempt to redirect national life to the needs of the people.

Sweden has been over-sold in recent years as a national *Wunderkind* where "the middle way" by-passes all the troublesome problems of monopoly capitalism and the looming red shadow of communism. There has been loose and unwarranted advocacy of its cooperatives and social legislation as pat panaceas for the United States. Dr. Myrdal makes no such claims. Quite the contrary, she believes that "some of the favorable publicity recently bestowed on the country has been exaggerated," and she is careful to point out in detail the special case Sweden presents—free from imperialistic

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ambitions, content to be small and make the most of what it has, devoid of a problem of minorities or of regional differences, socially well organized, and with adult education persuasively sponsored by the labor movement and the women's movement. "If democracy could not develop successfully in Scandinavia, given by historical chance quite exceptionally advantageous conditions, it will probably not work anywhere else." If such a geographically small and homogeneous nation presents a different situation from that found in a continent-wide domain ruled by clotted economic power, this may alter materially the tempo and ease of planning, but it does not alter the goal. The lesson of Swedish planning for us lies not so much in its cooperatives and other specific institutions as in the goal sought, the methods of planning employed, and the extent to which, in an admittedly simpler situation, manifestly desirable human ends have been demonstrated to be directly achievable.

Faced with the threat common to industrial societies of a falling birth rate, the Swedish Population Commission concluded after study of the problem that economic forces tend to develop adversely to the family if left to their own evolution, and that population decline would not halt itself but could only be stopped by a positive reorientation of social policy; and it set to work to remake society to fit children, rather than allowing children to be abolished to fit society. The strategy employed to this end deserves careful study by American planners. It has been demonstrated over and over again that society will tolerate social change in behalf of its children which it would reject out-of-hand for its allegedly free, rational, responsible adults. Avoiding the more difficult step of the head-on socialization of power over production, the Swedish policy approaches from the consumption side. It contents itself with asking: How much socialization of goods and services is necessary to encourage the having and the effective rearing of children? Such a proposal cuts deep and ultimately involves the fundamental clash foreseen by the Marxians. But one has only to review the relative ease with which Milo Perkins's food-stamp plan has been put over here to recognize the wisdom of this general strategy. As Dr. Myrdal remarks, nationalization from the consumer side is tactically far easier than from the production side.

The book falls into two parts. The first nine chapters present one of the best summaries of the problem of fertility in families available anywhere. Without sentimentality Dr. Myrdal marches straight into the facts all parents wrestle with: "children have become more and more cumbersome to parents and to society at large"; "voluntary choice of poverty for the sake of children is what young couples now are asked for"; "the circle which presents itself to prospective parents is a vicious one. Quality may be secured, but only by controlling quantity. Quantity can be secured only by sacrificing quality." The entire factual analysis proceeds from an explicit set of value premises regarding the purposes of democratic society. In the second section of the book Dr. Myrdal presents, with the insight of a technical participant in the work of the commission, the programs and substantial achievements to be noted, even this early, of the seventeen reports prepared between 1935 and 1938. The book is a triumph of exposition, demonstrating the fact that solid material need never be dull.

Two final points are worth stressing: the basic honesty and candor of this Swedish planning, and the harnessing of the entire resources of the nation to its fulfilment. In an area of behavior so markedly characterized by double-dealing, private and public, as that of family life and sex, the commission faced squarely the need for "clearing the ground of the public dishonesty in all that relates to sex and marriage and parenthood. No population program could be democratic with that task left undone." And we Americans, with our radio so tightly pegged down by private ownership and our adult education so meager, have plenty to learn from the Swedes when it comes to putting over change in things more important than brands of soap and cornflakes.

ROBERT S. LYND

PUBLISHED THIS WEEK

Japan's Dream of World Empire: The Tanaka Memorial. Edited with an Introduction by Carl Crow. Harper. $1.25.

The Art of Reading Poetry. By Earl Daniels. Farrar. $2.50.

People Under Hitler. By Wallace R. Deuel. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

From the Hunter's Bow. By Beatrice Edgerly. Edited by Borish Erich Nelson. Putnam's. $3.50.

Falling Through Space. By Richard Hillary. Reynal. $2.50.

The Dickens World. By Humphry House. Oxford. $3.

National Income and Its Composition, 1919-1938. By Simon Kuznets. National Bureau of Economic Research. 2 vols. $5.

Americans 1942: 18 Artists from 9 States. Edited by Dorothy C. Miller. Museum of Modern Art. $2.

Convoy. By Quentin Reynolds. Random House. $2.

The Flickering Torch. By William West Tomlinson. Putnam's. $1.50.

Return to the Future. By Sigrid Undset. Knopf. $2.50.

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A PREDICTION: Science will develop infants to manhood in twenty minutes and rejuvenate old age in one hundred and twenty minutes. Would these discoveries be of any advantage to the society? Indeed, they did not help Hale to win his war.

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Kermess in Munich

MUNICH PLAYGROUND. By Ernest R. Pope. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $2.75.

ONE of the first surprises invasion brought to France was the discovery of the wholesale venality of Nazi officials. Anything from an *Ausweis* to a war prisoner could be bought, provided one had the price. It came as a shock to the average Frenchman, who had been taken in more than he realized by Nazi propaganda—Nazi railing against the "rotten democracies" and their corrupt servants, as opposed to the "Nordic purity," the "moral renaissance," and the Spartan uprightness of the New Order. After all the ponderous talk about the "noble and traditional" status of women, our Breton postwoman, who had worn men's clothes for years, actually put on skirts when the Germans came for fear of offending the Nazi puritans. She had yet to hear German soldiers say, apropos of cosmetics, short hair, trousers, and cigarettes for women (and even "race-shaming," provided the victim was a Jewess), *"Ach, das ist nur Propaganda!"*

In "Munich Playground" Ernest Pope gets behind the "propaganda front" of the Nazi leaders. He sets out to explode "the myth that Hitler and his disciples are an awe-inspiring group of ascetic, fanatic, and inhuman supermen." Taking the war lords one by one, he shows what happens when the goose-stepping Nazi lays aside his military belt and steps out *als Mensch* for a little diversion. Power politics and grim decisions belong to Berlin. Munich is the pleasure capital, the happy hunting ground for marshals, ministers, Gestapo chiefs, Gauleiters, and the Führer of them all. In Munich Hitler and his disciples turn playboy, setting an example for all Nazis at play—a pattern that for all its license is as definitely oriented as the Nazi pattern of conquest. As newspaper correspondent in Munich for many years, Mr. Pope had a close-up view of both play and pattern. He gives a faithful—and appalling—picture.

As the soldier represents the ideal citizen according to Nazi notions, so Nazi play confines itself to the traditional diversions for weary warriors, *Wein, Weib, und Gesang*—with the emphasis put on the first two. In the foreground are the leaders, Hitler included. (Since the *Anschluss* he has "softened" noticeably, says Mr. Pope.) They lead the dance against a back-drop of banquet tables, champagne bottles, naked dancers, and love nests. Abetted by local Nazi racketeers, these parvenus from Berlin have transformed the pleasant city by the Isar into an unholy kermess of wine-bibbing, food-guzzling, and woman-hunting—with looting and Jew-baiting thrown in for spice—while the mumbo-jumbo of Himmler's Teutonic rituals adds its sinister accompaniment and the flames of Streicher's "purifying" bonfires stream high in the Bavarian night sky.

All moral barriers are down. Art, of which Hitler is the self-styled supreme dictator, and even music pander to the "healthy eroticism" that aims to fill countless cradles and breed new generations of Nazi soldiers for world conquest. For this is the orientation and the plan.

The native Bavarians, dear to Mr. Pope, take half-hearted part in the Nazi kermess. They are the "works," like the underpaid extras at the super-opera—paid ten cents an hour in their thousand-dollar costumes or their nakedness. The Bavarians are aware that a popular uprising is impossible; they pay lip-service to Hitler while waiting for a chance to "turn the Third Reich inside out" and "put the Führer and the Prussians in their place." They secretly hope that a stronger neighbor will beat the bully who has taken over their peaceful city for his pagan, though joyless, carnival, and they long for the time when they can return to their traditional *Gemütlichkeit*.

The moral of Mr. Pope's unpleasantly revealing book is his hint that Munich, the cradle of National Socialism, may one day become the cradle of the Fourth Reich.

IDA TREAT

Conquistador

HERNAN CORTES. By Salvador de Madariaga. The Macmillan Company. $4.

THIS book is rich in scholarship and superior writing. It would be still better if Señor de Madariaga had been able to make up his mind whether he was writing as a man of faith or a man of wit. Writing as a man of faith he would have us believe that the Spanish conquerors and discoverers actually believed what they said, that they subjected the Indian lands mainly to implant the Catholic religion. But writing as a man of wit he slyly slashes at this thesis until it is in tatters. The man of wit is the victor, not only because his wit is generally of a high order, but also because it lies much closer to the truth of history. The Cross was merely another weapon of conquest. Hernán Cortés made good use of it in Mexico, but he also knew exactly when to supplement it with guile, a bribe, or a salvo from his primitive artillery. The conquest of Mexico, writes Señor de Madariaga, was the most economical use of military power in history. This is true only in a limited sense, for at bottom the conquest was not a military but rather a diplomatic victory. Cortés was able to induce the Mexican tribes to conquer each other, and his own greatest military victory was not over the Tlaxcatecs or the Aztecs but over his fellow-Spaniards under Narváez, who were trying to steal the spoils.

At first view the conquest of Mexico seems miraculous, but it becomes somewhat less so when one understands, first, that the Aztec empire was rotten with oppression, and, second, that it had little real faith in its own institutions. The first made it easy for Cortés to enlist the subject tribes in a revolt against the dominant Aztecs. But the revolt would doubtless have failed, and with it Cortés himself, if the Aztecs had believed in themselves. The Aztecs fell not to superior military force but to a superior faith. The tragedy of the conquest was not so much in the fall of the Aztecs as in the inability of the Spaniards to direct the building of a new Mexican civilization, fused from the Aztec and the Spanish. The Spaniards were sufficiently superior to conquer, but not to construct. The result was an almost complete stagnation which was to endure 400 years, and was not to be broken until the vitality of the Mexican tribes began to reassert itself in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Señor de Madariaga has appended a valuable bibliography.

CHARLES CURTIS MUNZ

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IN BRIEF

DRAGON'S TEETH. By Pearl S. Buck. The John Day Company. $2.50.

The family of Ling Tan lived near a tiny village on the outskirts of Nanking, and when the first Japanese flying ship dropped a bomb in a neighbor's back yard they all thought how lucky the man was to have a pond suddenly dug for him when he had for years been trying to find time to do that very job himself. They learned a great deal in the course of the next year. Pearl Buck tells the story of the rape of Nanking with the same meticulous, sometimes almost plodding, attention to the details of daily life that has marked her other novels about China.

THUS SPEAKS GERMANY. By W. W. Coole and M. F. Potter. Harper and Brothers. $3.50.

This anthology of Nazi and pre-Nazi moral and political theory, culled from the speeches and writings of Hitler, his forerunners, and his disciples, is a valuable compendium despite certain uncritical assumptions which determine the choice of material. The Nazi theories of race and nation, of international law and lawlessness, of the rights of victors and the lack of rights of the vanquished, and all the other elaborations of moral nihilism are presented in the form of succinct quotations. The similarities between traditional Prussian and modern Nazi theories are emphasized, but significant differences between them are not understood. The thesis of a consistent German cynicism and frightfulness, underlying all periods of German life, is pushed to a ridiculous conclusion when the Weimar Republic is presented as the conscious disguise of the German wolf, assumed for the purpose of fooling little Red Riding Hood and discarded when no longer needed. Innocent statements by Gustav Stresemann, which could be matched from the writings of any British or American statesman, are quoted as if they substantiated this thesis.

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DRAMA

Culture and Anarchy

LAST season's play about William Saroyan was neither very convincing nor very funny. Now, however, Samson Raphaelson has attacked the same intriguing subject with far better results. In fact, his "Jason" (Hudson Theater) is a good deal better than merely the best play so far about the Daring Young Man; it is also, in my opinion at least, Mr. Raphaelson's best work to date—adroit, amusing, shrewd, and as close to life as artificial comedy of this sort really needs to be.

Naturally the whole thing would be doomed from the start if the cocky young playwright did not seem a possible person and if—what is harder—he was not also endowed with that disarming charm which is difficult to describe but which the original indubitably has. On both these counts—but particularly on the second—the hero of the previous play failed lamentably; on both, Mr. Raphaelson's Mike Ambler is more than merely acceptable. He will seem quite a possible person to those who have not the pleasure of Mr. Saroyan's acquaintance, a very good likeness indeed to those who have; and once this character is accepted as fundamentally real, the spectator is perfectly willing to accept along with him the artificial situations out of which the play is built up.

Mr. Raphaelson imagines that Ambler forces his way into the home of a rather anemically cultured drama critic, teaches the latter to play craps, very nearly steals his wife, and, what is worse, very nearly destroys his critical detachment. For the critic, having already changed his opinion two or three times, is just dictating his enthusiastic review of Ambler's first play when he learns about his wife. He starts another denouncing the playwright, and he finally ends with a third—very nicely phrased, by the way—in which, one may presume, Mr. Raphaelson is giving his own balanced conclusions concerning romantic egotists who do, rather exasperatingly, sometimes have something to say quite worth the hearing. Jason's culture has a few things to learn from Mike's anarchy.

Good as it is, the play as a whole is, nevertheless, what we members of the profession like to call "contrived." By that we mean, of course, that it is not, like the plays of Mike Ambler Saroyan, merely the product of genius letting itself go in order to see what will happen. But we mean more than that. We mean also that it is not inevitable once the situation has been stated; that the various turns of events are manipulated by a playwright who decides at every instance what turn he will give the action. We mean that it is the kind of play "not written but rewritten," the kind that might end in any one of two or three ways and that ends as it does because the author, having considered different possibilities, finally determines that the balance of various considerations makes this particular one the most feasible. But we do not mean that all such plays are completely trivial or that there are not levels of contrivance. For contrivance may be adroit or clumsy, and it may also sacrifice either all or none of the playwright's intellectual conviction.

Mr. Raphaelson's successful plays have always been contrived—that is obviously the way he works; but the contrivance has tended to grow more adroit and to serve better and better to express a more and more mature intelligence. A decade and a half ago "The Jazz Singer" expressed a sincere but crudely sensational sentimentalism by means of contrivances on the level of cheap melodrama. More recently "Skylark" seemed to sacrifice both sincerity and clarity of thought to slickness of writing which made it a very successful vehicle for a star. That play, indeed, marked a decided regression from "Accent on Youth," which preceded it, because it was obviously less sincere. But "Jason" is the best of the lot. Mr. Raphaelson has something he believes and wants to say about a certain kind of writing and a certain kind of man. He contrives a story, and that contrived story says very pointedly and amusingly what he wants to say.

There is a good deal more to the plot than I have indicated, and I shall go no farther into that, but perhaps it should be stated for the sake of the public that Jason himself does not seem to be intended as a recognizable portrait of any individual member of the Drama Critics' Circle, and it is quite certain that none will be anxious to claim himself as the original. Nicholas Conte does a quite remarkable job as Mike Ambler, and the whole production is cleverly managed.

What one thinks of "Cafe Crown"

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(Cort Theater) will depend largely upon how much very obvious contrivance one is willing to put up with for the sake of some flavorsome dialogue and a picturesque character or two. Like "Jason" it is topical, since the cafe in question is unmistakably the Cafe Royal on Second Avenue, where Jewish actors, playwrights, and journalists have congregated for generations. Obviously the author knows his scene, his characters, and the way they talk. With the help of Sam Jaffe as the proprietor-waiter and Morris Carnovsky as the less successfully drawn veteran of the stage he presents some racy moments. But the story of egotism and sacrifice, of the rising star seduced by Hollywood, is told in such a way that none of its banality and none of its sentimentality can possibly be missed. JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

RECORDS

THE best jazz performances issued on records since I last wrote on the subject, in September, are the Sidney Bechet "Texas Moaner" (Victor 27600) and "Rose Room" (Victor 27707), with Shavers's work on trumpet; the Allen-Higginbotham "Indiana" (Okeh 6357), mostly for the playing of Higginbotham and Hall; the Cootie Williams "West End Blues" (Okeh 6370). Good are the Teddy Wilson Orchestra's first chorus of "I Can't Believe That You're in Love with Me" (Columbia 36335); the Allen-Higginbotham Orchestra's accompaniment of Ida Cox's rhythmically powerful but tonally threadbare singing of "I Can't Quit That Man" (Okeh 6405); Mildred Bailey's "Lover Come Back to Me" (Decca 3953); Maxine Sullivan's "Loch Lomond" (Decca 3954); and, in Victor's "Hot Piano" (Set P-75, $2.50), Earl Hines's performance of "On the Sunny Side of the Street" (27562), Duke Ellington's of "Dear Old Southland" (27564), "Fats" Waller's of "Carolina Shout" (27563)—but not the performances on the reverse sides, and not those of Jelly-Roll Morton on 27565. The Kirby Orchestra's "Tweed Me" (Victor 27667) and "Fifi's Rhapsody" (27598) offer about an inch of fairly good free-style playing between slick arranged introductory and concluding choruses; and as a piece of composed jazz the Benny Goodman Orchestra's "The Earl" (Okeh 6474), with Mel Powell's piano-playing, is enjoyable.

That is very little for so long a period; but in recent months small-band jazz improvisation has virtually disappeared from the companies' announcements. The reason is that it does not sell in large quantities; and a point which might be made about that is that if one campaigns for the high-powered arranged jazz of Benny Goodman one helps to create a demand for the high-powered arranged jazz of Benny Goodman, not for small-band improvisation. Nothing new is being recorded; and the old things are no longer being reissued: Columbia has announced no further hot jazz classics since its September "Louis and Earl" (Set C-73, $2.50), devoted to 1927 and 1928 Louis Armstrong performances with Earl Hines at the piano. Like the others in the series this set gives us two outstanding performances, "West End Blues" and "Muggles" (both on 36377), and three good ones, "Heah Me Talkin' to Ya?" and "Tight Like This" (both on 36378), and "A Monday Date" (36375); and like the others it wastes precious sides on "Weather Bird" (36375), and on two previously unissued performances discovered in the Columbia archives that should have been left there—"Chicago Breakdown" and "Don't Jive Me" (both on 36376). With the series at an end one is aware of the fine things that were reissued; but one is bound to think of the others that were not, and that now probably never will be, and that would be available if the sides had not been used for pretentious discoveries and for things which provided excuses for equally pretentious discussions of styles and developments and influences. One is bound to think of the superb early Armstrongs, for example, that might have been included in this last set if the purpose had been simply to reissue the best out-of-print jazz performances, and not to provide the occasion for a wild piece of phrase-slinging about the relation of Louis and Earl.

Decca's "Blackstick" (Set 240, $2.25), devoted to performances with outstanding clarinetists, offers three that are very good, the Johnny Dodds "Melancholy" (3864), with Shavers on trumpet and Bunn on guitar, and the Danny Polo "Blue Murder" and the Jimmy Noone "I Know That You Know" (both on 3863), the second with Shavers and an excellent pianist. Fairly good, also, are the Bud Freeman "Sunday" (3865), for Kaminsky's cornet rather than Russell's clarinet, and the Rollini "Davenport Blues" (3862), with Jack Teagarden and Benny Goodman.

Columbia issued no Masterworks last month; but the set (473, $3.50) of Chopin's Etudes Op. 25 that was announced two or three months ago has arrived. Kilenyi's performances haven't the technical or musical finesse of Bachaus's in the regrettably withdrawn Victor set; and imperfect recording makes them occasionally not clear; but for the most part—except for the mannered performances of No. 1 in A flat and the middle section of No. 10 in B minor—they are technically adequate and musically acceptable. My copy has a couple of bad surfaces.

Questions keep coming in about a low-priced ($100-$150) machine; and all I can answer is what an engineer I talk to about such matters tells me he would do if he were looking for one for himself. He would go to a Montgomery Ward outlet and look at the license labels on the backs of the larger machines; he would listen to the machines which had in the lower left-hand or right-hand corner of the label the initials "W. G. Co." or "B. R. Co.," which are those of the Wells Gardner or the Belmont Company; if one of these machines sounded good he would take it; if none sounded good he would consider the search hopeless.

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

Liberty in War Time

Dear Sirs: Reinhold Niebuhr in your issue of January 24 argues for restrictions on civil liberties in war time by setting up straw figures named "absolutists" and "relativists." In the name of relativism he proceeds to dispose of the absolutists who would sacrifice national unity to unrestricted liberty.

This might be a very useful distinction if the two groups existed, but there just ain't any such animals as absolutists. The most extreme champions of civil liberty draw a line somewhere—at "clear and present danger" or incitements to illegal acts—let alone making many qualifications in the field of obscenity and libel. And all of them are compelled constantly to balance one right against another in developing public policy: to take a minor example, the divergent rights of pickets, of the public, and of non-striking workers. In war time all recognize the need for regulating the use of military information, for censoring communication with foreign countries, and for putting restrictions on certain enemy aliens.

The plain fact is that all libertarians are "relativists." Dr. Niebuhr is simply a more cautious relativist than those whose policies he scores. His thesis, reduced to a simple statement, is that a democracy in war time must insure unity by a reasonable degree of regrettable coercion. He regards coercion as too dangerous to risk much of it; so he urges that criticism of government be kept inviolate and that even anti-democratic movements be allowed except when there is a "clear and present danger" of acts.

The "absolutists" he creates would not disagree with that. They would only be less inclined than he to justify possibly wider coercion by taking refuge in a vague "total situation." And they would affirm loudly and insistently that a democracy can fight a war and keep its liberties intact. They would buttress his questioning faith by practical examples far ahead of his relative conservatism—the experience of England, the more recent decisions of the Supreme Court, and universal condemnation of national "unity" by suppression in the World War. And they would recall the words of Attorney General Biddle, who said after the declaration of war: "If we care about democracy, we must care about it as a reality for others as well as for ourselves; yes, for aliens, for Germans, for Italians, for Japanese; for those who are against us as well as those who are with us. For the Bill of Rights protects not only American citizens but all human beings who live on our American soil, under our American flag."

This is not the rhetoric of an "absolutist." Happily, it is the professed policy of an Administration which appears to comprehend the essential obligations of democratic liberty in war time.

ROGER BALDWIN, Director,
American Civil Liberties Union

New York, January 28

The People Speaking

Dear Sirs: The campaign that has been conducted by Freda Kirchwey and I. F. Stone in the case of the Free Peoples of the World vs. the United States State Department is a most gratifying bit of journalism. It is astonishing that not more people in this country are alive to the tragic division that exists between the White House and Mr. Hull's department. The indifference of the people as a whole to the monstrous policies of the State Department set can be ascribed possibly to an ancient American conviction that diplomacy is an esoteric business, circuitous at best, which can be engaged in only by the select, without interference from the voting public.

What did we gain by recognizing Vichy? The State Department and its apologists say we maintained the delicate balance of Pétain's France and prevented it from toppling over to the Nazi cause. But what did we lose? The respect and admiration of millions of Frenchmen inside and outside France. We have betrayed the great bulk of Frenchmen who hate Vichy as they hate Berlin because they are one and the same.

The State Department protest in connection with the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon carries the whole matter to a ludicrous extremity The war had already begun for us. Vichy was, as it is now, as much an enemy of the United States as the Quisling government of Norway, the Rome government of Mussolini, the Berlin government of Hitler. Yet our State Department "regrets" that our friends and allies, the Free French, have so far forgotten the amenities of appeasement as to remove the threat of enemy bases from our coastline. What's more, the State Department tells Vichy—our enemy—that the people of the United States are sorry.

We are not sorry! We are glad! Glad that some Frenchmen have not forgotten Lafayette and liberty. We indorse, with a thousand amens, tributes such as *The Nation* paid to the Free French leaders in its telegram. We who are fighting for liberty and are not appeasing dictators want desperately to tell the Free French that their cause is not lost, as they must sometimes think it is. We want to assure them that it is we the people speaking and not the State Department.

Yes, I agree with you: Mr. Hull must go, and our State Department must be reorganized. This is essential to the unity of anti-fascists throughout the world. We must tell the peoples in dark Europe, the bitterly confused Chinese, the disillusioned, almost forgotten Loyalists of Spain, that we are awake now —really alive to the danger—and that we regret what has gone before. President Roosevelt must be free of influence that would make a travesty of the Atlantic Charter and the pact of the United Nations of the World.

NORMAN A. KAHL

Washington, D. C., January 10

Dear Sirs: You are right in your protest against the attitude of our State Department toward the liberty-loving people of St. Pierre and Miquelon. The State Department committed the same blunder when the Spanish Republicans fought for freedom. If we had supplied munitions to them, Hitler and Mussolini would never have dared to pursue their ruthless warfare.

SAMUEL A. CARLSON

Jamestown, N. Y., January 12

Dear Sirs: Freda Kirchwey's article with the flaming headline Mr. Hull Should Resign, in *The Nation* for January 23, seemed ungenerous and unwise at a time when we are trying so hard to unite all of the many forces that must be united if we are to win this war. I feel indignant personally about St. Pierre and Miquelon, but I do not think we should speak against the government at a time

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like this. As a pacifist I have to be so muzzled about the war at best, but we must win a war in order to gain peace and I believe action more important than thoughts. I have read *The Nation* for fifty years!

GERTRUDE H. FRIEDLANDER

Cincinnati, Ohio, January 9

Dear Sirs: Congratulations on your editorial Mr. Hull Should Resign. I have followed Mr. Hull's course of action, along with your comments, from the time of the Spanish civil war, and I believe there is a growing feeling that Mr. Hull has served his time and should resign. I only hope that you will continue along this same line until you succeed in forcing his retirement. One cannot get up very much enthusiasm over the defense program with Hull doing everything possible to appease the aggressor. A. B. COULTER

Tacoma, Wash., January 10

Dear Sirs: Each week I read *The Nation* with eagerness and admiration. Just now I cannot refrain from telling you that I am thrilled by the courageous attitude the editors took in regard to the Free French occupation of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. My heartiest congratulations to you and my very best wishes in all your good work.

EDNA SKINNER

Amherst, Mass., January 16

Dear Sirs: Marvel if you must at the "unawareness" of London and Washington. "Unpreparedness," however, denotes at least a recognition of the fact that there is something to prepare against. Such a recognition would be far beyond the comprehension of the State Department, which has proved that it will recognize no nation as a foe until it whacks us in the head with a blackjack we have sold it.

T. A. TENOR

Beaver Falls, Pa., January 24

The Oklahoma Book Trials

Dear Sirs: Over a year ago a letter of mine appeared in the columns of *The Nation* describing the arrest and conviction of a number of persons in Oklahoma for the alleged possession of "subversive literature." That letter was written just after my release from the Oklahoma County jail. Since that time the Oklahoma "book trials" have become a national scandal, and as a result no further trials have been held since the sentencing of Ina Wood to ten years in the penitentiary in June, 1941. All the defendants, including those convicted, are free on bond supplied through the International Labor Defense.

However, the people of our country should not forget about the Oklahoma prosecutions. Four individuals still have sentences of ten years hanging over them; eight others still face trial. The Oklahoma American Legion has announced that it will file a brief as friend of the court in behalf of the prosecution when appeals come up on the four "criminal-syndicalism" convictions. The Knights of Pythias have already filed such a brief, describing as "communistic" the American Civil Liberties Union and all other organizations which have shown an interest in maintaining the Bill of Rights in Oklahoma. When the librarian of Dartmouth College wrote for a list of the books still held in the Oklahoma County jail, the Oklahoma City *Times* reported that John Eberle, the assistant county attorney credited with main responsibility for the prosecutions, said: "If Dartmouth wants them, Dartmouth can have them. I don't care who reads them in New Hampshire. I'm interested in their effect in Oklahoma." There can be no doubt that the prosecution would take advantage of the slightest lack of vigilance on the part of the American public to resume its book-burnings.

I am therefore very glad to be able to report that in December, 1941, 279 prominent social scientists of the country wrote to the Governor of Oklahoma expressing the belief that "at a time like the present, when millions are suffering and dying to defend their freedom and national independence, we in the United States dare not allow our own democratic processes to be weakened." The social scientists pointed out that "many of the books upon which the convictions were based can be found in school and public libraries throughout the country. When appropriate, we assign them to our students and discuss them in our classes. The important point is not that we do these things but that we must continue to do them if we are not to betray our trust to the youth of America."

To this protest was added last week that of 145 leading social workers and educators from 33 states. Their letter followed an appeal sent out by Eduard C. Lindeman, Helen Hall, and Harry L. Lurie and signed by the heads of some thirty leading settlement houses and numerous agency heads, both public and private, including Mary Anderson, Head of the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor.

I feel sure that many of your readers will want to do their part in defeating the Oklahoma witch-hunters by writing to Governor Leon C. Phillips, Oklahoma City, expressing their hope that he will bring these prosecutions to an end. ELIZABETH Z. GREEN

New York, January 29

A Negro College Teacher

Dear Sirs: In your issue of January 10 there appears this statement from the Committee for the Advancement of Negro Studies in New York: "But only the University of Chicago has given a teaching job to one of these qualified Negro American intellectuals." This is no doubt true with regard to the special group of Ph.D.'s referred to. However, it should be pointed out that Harvard University has at least one Negro on the teaching staff of its Medical School. This is the eminent syphilologist William A. Hinton, M.D., instructor in bacteriology and immunology and in preventive medicine and hygiene. Dr. Hinton developed the widely used diagnostic serum reaction for syphilis which bears his name. LYTT GARDNER

Boston, Mass., January 20

Scrap-Collecting on Farms

Dear Sirs: I was interested in the item in your issue of January 24 regarding the scarcity of scrap and our failure to organize any campaign to get it. I suppose you know that the greatest repositories of scrap in the country are the farms, where it is estimated there is enough, when mixed with the proper quantity of new steel, to make as many battleships as now exist. The Department of Agriculture through its Food for Freedom Program is carrying on an active campaign for the repair of farm machinery and through its state and county war boards a scrap-collecting campaign. This campaign is quite well organized, is improving daily, and is bringing results.

T. SWANN HARDING

Falls Church, Va., January 30

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